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Kent on Sunday

www.kentnews.co.uk February 19, 2017

North & West edition No 752



BREXIT

Anger at Brussels fishing plot

MP says he will fight plan to maintain quotas

COMMUNITY

Battle to save youth club

Campaigners oppose council plans

HOUSING

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We should take pride in Britain's fighting spirit

THIS week's paper features a number of stories of fight and community spirit against apparent hardship.

Be that the brave parents of tragic Faye Burdett, still fighting for a vaccine to be provided for all children, despite the government insisting it couldn't happen.

Be that the communities in Tonbridge fighting to find a new home for the youth and sports clubs whose futures are at risk after the borough council sold land and buildings in order to develop a medical centre on the site.

Or be that the Baroness of Beckenham, Floella Benjamin, who this week became the first living black person to have a statue on public display - still fighting to break down racial barriers that have stood in her way throughout her life.

Of course the people of Kent overwhelmingly voted to leave the European Union in last summer's referendum - a move considered by many, not least our own Nigel Farage, to be fighting back against the so-called establishment.

Naturally, there are still many who voted to remain who continue to fight for a second referendum, or at least for a more democratic way of shaping a Brexit that delivers the best possible future for the people of Britain.

Indeed, the European Parliament appears to be insisting that quotas must remain for our fishermen even after we leave the EU - again, something our MPs say they will fight.

Whichever side of the EU debate you sit on, that sense of not giving up and constantly striving to better ourselves is what makes Britain so great.

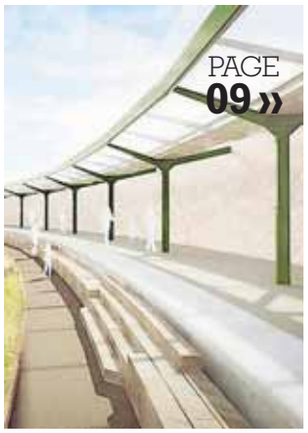
Change is often a scary prospect, but if we want to evolve and truly get on then it's something we sometimes have to embrace.

Resting on our laurels gets us nowhere and that continual process of improvement should be what drives us in our schools, our places of work and in all walks of life.

Surely that attitude is the greatest British asset of them all.

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Churchill alien theories revealed in hidden essay

By John von Radowitz
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LEADER: Winston Churchill lived at Chartwell in Westerham

THE existence of alien life on other planets may not have been the most pressing issue facing Winston Churchill in 1939, with Europe on the brink of war.

But it was something he thought about deeply, a newly unearthed essay written by the wartime leader has revealed.

In the 11-page article, entitled "Are We Alone in the Universe?" Churchill, who lived at Chartwell in Westerham, muses about the possibility of life evolving elsewhere in the Solar System and beyond.

Pre-empting discoveries of extra-solar planets by more than five decades, he defines what scientists later called the "habitable" or "Goldilocks" zone - the narrow orbital region where a planet is not too hot or too cold but "just right" to support life.

The essay - possibly intended for publication in the Sunday newspaper The News of the World - had been hidden away at the US National Churchill Museum in Fulton, Missouri, since the 1980s.

The document was rediscovered last year by the museum's new director Timothy Riley, who passed it on to Israeli astrophysicist, author and former Hubble Space Telescope scientist Mario Livio.

Describing the find in the journal Nature, Professor Livio said it came as a "great surprise," despite Churchill's well-known interest in science.

Churchill was the first prime minister to hire a science adviser, and in the 1920s and 30s wrote a number of popular science essays for newspapers and magazines on topics such as evolution and cells.

In one 1931 article for The Strand Magazine, entitled "Fifty Years Hence" he predicted the invention of hydrogen-fuelled nuclear fusion power.

Churchill regularly met scientists such as Bernard Lovell, the father of radio astronomy.

His article about alien life was written soon after the 1938 radio broadcast by Orson Welles dramatising The War Of The Worlds by HG Wells, which caused widespread panic among listeners in the US who thought they really were being invaded by Martians.

Churchill concluded that due to their distance from the sun, Mars and Venus were the only two places in the Solar System other than Earth that could conceivably harbour life.

Driver caused £31,000 of damage in 120mph police chase down M20

A RECKLESS motorist who caused £31,000 damage to police vehicles and even tried to drive his car into an officer following a high speed motorway chase has been jailed.

Scott Flisher, 25, of Elmwood Road in Chattenden, was seen speeding by officers patrolling the M20 in last summer but refused to stop when requested to do so – leading to a high speed pursuit.

The drama began at junction 8 of the coastbound carriageway, near Lenham, at 5.48am on August 28 when officers in a marked Land Rover Discovery saw Flisher speed past them in a blue Seat Leon.

They activated their emergency lights but, instead of slowing down and coming to a stop, Flisher increased his speed to 110mph in a bid to get away.

He left the motorway at junction 9, for Ashford, and drove through a set of red lights before re-joining the M20 on the London-bound side where he reached speeds of 120mph, driving down the hard shoulder to avoid a rolling road block being enforced by officers.

The pursuit ended with Flisher leaving the motorway at junction 4, for Maidstone, only to crash at a roundabout due to his speed.

An officer on foot approached the car to arrest him but Flisher rammed his way through the police cars and deliberately drove in the direction of the PC, who had to jump onto the bonnet of their car to avoid serious injury.

Flisher was able to travel another 30 metres before another patrol car successfully pinned his car to a side railing, after which he fled on foot before being finally arrested in woodland adjacent to the motorway.

Flisher pleaded guilty to dangerous driving, destroying property, driving without a licence and insurance and was jailed for 18 months last week.

He was also slapped with a 33 month driving ban and will have to take an extended re-test.

Court told cost of motorway bridge collapse hit £1.5m

A LORRY driver has appeared in court accused of causing more than £1.5 million of damage following the collapse of a motorway bridge on the M20 during last August's bank holiday weekend.

The bridge fell after a wheeled excavator and dumper being transported by Alan Austen, 63, from Durham, on the back of a lorry struck it between junctions four and three on the London-bound carriageway.

No-one was killed but Jim Shaw, 73, of Thamesmead suffered three broken ribs after he came off his motorbike to avoid the bridge.

No pleas were entered, and the case was sent to Maidstone Crown Court for a hearing on March 17.

Footballer sentenced after racially assaulting opponent

A FOOTBALLER from Ashford is starting a two year sentence in a young offenders' institution after admitting a racially aggravated assault on an opponent.

The assault took place on February 27 last year at a Kent County League match between South Darenth FC and Kennington Reserves FC at Sandyhurst Lane in Ashford.

Luke James Burdon, 19, of Hillbrow Lane, was playing for Kennington when he elbowed an opponent, who had just successfully tackled him, in the face.

He used racist language directed at the victim while he carried out the assault and was sent off by the referee.

An x-ray revealed the victim's jaw had been broken in three places.

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NSPCC warning after 30 FGM cases in county

LATEST figures show 30 cases of Female Genital Mutilation taking place in Kent, as the NSPCC reveals its helpline has been receiving hundreds of contacts about the practice.

FGM has been a criminal offence in the UK for 30 years, and in 2003 it also became a criminal offence for UK nationals or permanent UK residents to take their child abroad to be circumcised in this way.

Despite this, there is yet to be a successful prosecution for the offence.

John Cameron, head of NSPCC Helplines said: ''For far too long female genital cutting has been cloaked in secrecy so we need more people in communities to join forces to ensure this dangerous practice is ended.''

Outrage at Brussels plot to maintain quotas for fishermen after Brexit

By Tom Pyman
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CRAIG Mackinlay MP has branded a reported move by the European Parliament to block Britain's bid to gain full control of its fishing waters post-Brexit as "completely unacceptable".

A leaked European Parliament memo obtained by the Guardian reveals existing quotas are set to remain in place as part of the deal to take Britain out of the European Union.

MEPs have drafted seven provisions to be included in Britain's "exit agreement", including the stipulation that there will be "no increase to the UK's share of fishing opportunities for jointly fished stocks".

Exiting the EU's controversial Common Fisheries Policy and removing quotas for fishermen was a major policy for the Vote Leave campaign in last year's referendum, particularly in coastal areas of Kent.

Currently, smaller quotas are dished out to boats under 10 metres long, which primarily makes up the fleet in the county, and because of these restrictions, fishermen have reported a huge decline in industry in fishing towns like Folkestone, Ramsgate and Whitstable.



ROW: Thanet MP to fight plan

Mr Mackinlay, Conservative MP for South Thanet, told KoS: "This appears to be their idea of playing hardball and it's not good.

"It's completely unacceptable, and I will be fighting this."

Remain campaigners warned prior to the referendum that voting for Brexit would be a "leap in the dark" - words used by former chancellors George Osborne and Alistair Darling on a visit to Ashford days before.

"If you're selling a car, you're not going to say it's full of rust," Mr Mackinlay admitted.

"When you become independent you take the assumption you're going to win back control - it's a reasonable expectation in accordance with international law."

A government spokesperson said: "Leaving the EU is a real opportunity to review fisheries management in the UK.

"We will be working hard to secure the best possible deal for all our fishermen, one which ensures fair access to quota, sustainable stocks and a healthy marine environment."



ROMANCE: Messages at stations

Love in the air across county rail network

LOVE was clearly in the air this Valentine's Day as passengers across the Southeastern rail network sent romantic messages to their nearest and dearest at stations throughout Kent.

The messages have appeared on information boards at a number of stations today, after the rail franchise received romantic requests from commuters.

One message at Chatham station spoke about meeting his future partner on a Southeastern train five years ago: "To my darling wife Nichola Baker. As with any journey, who you travel with is more important than the destination. From when we first met on a train, I still love that we can travel together every day. Love you so much X X X."

Whilst at Canterbury, one commuter wanted to surprise his girlfriend as she travelled down to London from Canterbury West to meet him.

Southeastern's passenger information manager, John Till added: "Playing cupid is just one of the ways we look to put a smile on our passengers' faces and we hope the lucky ones enjoyed the surprise messages from their Valentine.

"We connect people every day but always love to hear about couples who first set eyes on each other on our network."

1,200 fines issued for littering in Ashford

SOME 1,200 littering fines have been issued by Ashford Borough Council since it launched a partnership with a private company last September.

During the trial, which runs until next September, officers from private firm Kingdom have the authority to issue a £75 on the spot fine for those caught deliberately dropping litter or not clearing up after their pet, and there will be no reduction in cost for early payment.

Three officers are on patrol across the borough - two located in Ashford town centre and one monitoring Tenterden - and their identities are not kept hidden from the public as they wear uniforms similar to the council's parking enforcement officers.

The council has stated that any profits made are pushed back into supporting other environmental projects within the council, including additional dog warden patrols and equipment for litter education and enforcement campaigns.

Body found at foot of cliffs in Eastbourne

A BODY found at Beachy Head near Eastbourne in Sussex is believed to be a 55-year-old man who went missing from his home near Tonbridge this week.

Charles Young was reported missing from Brenchley on Monday after leaving home at 6am to travel to Sandhurst in Berkshire and not returning as expected at 10am, despite his car being found not far from his address.

Kent Police confirmed that it has now ended its search for Mr Young.

A Sussex Police spokesperson said earlier this week: ''The man's body was spotted around 5pm on Monday, but weather conditions prevented its safe recovery that evening.

''He was recovered by members of the Eastbourne RNLI's inshore lifeboat at about 8.45am on Tuesday and taken back to the lifeboat station.''

The death is not being treated as suspicious and the family of Mr Young have been informed.

The coroner has been notified and an inquest will open in due course.

Family of Port victim still hunting answers

THE families of Stephen Port's murder victims are still looking for answers as a BBC documentary aired this week, telling the story through their eyes.

Serial killer Port was sentenced to life imprisonment in November for the murder of Gravesend chef Daniel Whitworth, 21, as well as three other young men he stalked on gay dating site, Grindr.

Mr Whitworth's family recently launched an appeal for information ahead of planned legal action against the Met Police's handling of the case.

A total of 17 police officers face investigation for possible misconduct over the catalogue of failures in catching the killer.

Mr Whitworth's step-mother, Mandy Pearson, said: ''We continue to seek answers and accountability from the police about how, for a whole year, they let us believe that Daniel had committed suicide, in which time Port had gone on to kill again.

''We all hope that the documentary will be a positive experience, resulting in further potential witnesses coming forward.''

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MP to host Commons debate in her fight to save barracks

By Tom Pyman
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THE fight to save Invicta Park Barracks from closure will roll into Westminster next week.

Maidstone and the Weald MP Helen Grant has been granted a debate on the government's 'A Better Defence Estate Strategy' by the House of Commons backbench business committee.

The application was supported by 10 other MPs comprising of six Conservative, three Labour and two SNP members who represent constituencies across the country from Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey in the far north, to Brecon and Radnorshire in the west.

The debate will take place on Tuesday in the House of Commons for 90 minutes.

As the lead member, Mrs Grant is likely to have the opportunity to open and close the proceedings.

The debate will mark a key milestone in the MP's campaign by providing a public platform for her, and her colleagues, to air, directly to government, their concerns about the decision to close the barracks.

The announcement was first made by fellow Kent MP and defence secretary Sir Michael Fallon last year, who revealed plans to sell off a sizeable chunk of the Ministry of Defence estate, which currently covers nearly two per cent of the UK's land area, including the coutny town barracks.



FIGHT: Helen Grant has campaigned for months against the planned closure

Sir Michael told MPs it costs £2.5 billion a year to maintain the overall estate, and 40 per cent of the MoD's built assets are more than 50 years old.

It is hoped selling the sites could save £140m of running costs over the next decade and provide housing where there is a need for more.

Speaking after securing the Westminster discussion, Mrs Grant said: "I am grateful to the backbench business committee for allocating time for this debate.

"It will provide a much needed opportunity for MPs to air their views and importantly will require the minister to respond.

"I will be making the case that the decision to close Invicta Park Barracks is unfair, particularly on members of the Queen's Gurkha Engineers and their families, for whom Maidstone has become their permanent and settled home."

Union rejects deal as rail row rumbles on

THE Southern Railway dispute has dramatically flared up after members of the drivers' union rejected a deal aimed at resolving a long-running row over driver-only trains.

General secretary, Mick Whelan said: ''We understand and support the decision arrived at democratically by our members and will now work to deliver a resolution in line with their expectations.''

Blue star Lee Ryan joins EastEnders cast

BLUE singer Lee Ryan, who originates from Chatham, is to join the cast of EastEnders as Albert Square's latest bad boy.

The musician, who had hits including All Rise and One Love with the boy band, will ''ruffle feathers and break hearts'' as 'Woody' Woodward when he arrives in Walford in the spring.

OAP killed in smash

AN elderly man has died after a van ploughed into a lamp post in Maidstone this week.

Police were called to the scene of the crash in Willington Street near the junction of Sutton Road at around 4.30pm on Wednesday, where the air ambulance and firefighters also attended.

The 75-year-old died at the scene.



Concern as hate crime rises by 60% after EU referendum

HATE crime offences in Kent increased dramatically immediately after the EU referendum, figures show.

According to new data, Kent Police logged 277 offences between July and September last year - a rise of 60 per cent from the number between April and June, and the highest quarterly figure since comparable records began in April 2012.

Gurvinder Sandher, who chairs the Kent Police Independent Advisory Group, acts as vice chair of the Kent Police and Crime Panel and stood as an independent in last year's police and crime commissioner election - won by Matthew Scott - admitted he was troubled by the figures.

"This increase in racially motivated hate crime is a concern but I am aware that the trend in recent weeks has been downwards and I hope that this will continue," he told KoS.

"We should be proud of our positive community relations across the county and all communities, regardless of ethnicity and faith, should be working together to ensure a minority do not spoil it for the overwhelming majority."



Jail for man who tried to start fire in health centre

A man who tried to start a fire in a mental health facility and stabbed two workers there has been handed a prison sentence.

Myha Grant, of no fixed address, had been receiving treatment at the Bracton Centre after attacking a random member of the public with a champagne bottle near Brixton Tube station.

Whilst at the centre, the 31-year-old stabbed two members of staff on July 17, before starting a fire.

Grant had pleaded guilty to two counts of wounding with intent to cause grievous bodily harm, one count of arson, and causing grievous bodily harm in Brixton.

On the day in question, Grant hid outside a locked kitchen door, bursting in when he heard it being opened from the other side.

The member of staff opening the door was thrown to the ground by the force of the door. Grant then grabbed a knife and stabbed the worker repeatedly in his chest, stomach and arms before turning on a second worker who had activated a panic alarm, stabbing him a number of times in his groin, arm, leg, chest and stomach.

Grant, who is currently being detained in hospital under the Mental Health Act, then started a small fire with parts of a cigarette lighter and items of clothing.

He was arrested in the courtyard and was this week sentenced to 16 years, and will serve the jail term if his condition improves.

Pensioner hit by lorry

PART of Sevenoaks High Street was closed on Thursday morning after an elderly man was hit by a lorry.

The man has since been taken to a London hospital with serious injuries and police are continuing to make enquiries.

Coach destroyed in fire

A COACH that was being converted into a motorhome in Ramsgate was destroyed by fire this week.

Crews were called to Manston Road at around 11.15pm on Tuesday and wore breathing apparatus to fight the fire, using a high pressure hose reel and main jet.

Seasonal lifeguards

LIFEGUARD provision at a beach where three young Bexleyheath men died last year has moved a step closer.

Rother District Council, which is responsible for Camber Sands in East Sussex, had its cabinet approve £51,000 for a seasonal lifeguard service this week.

£900k station facelift

BAT & Ball station could be set for a £900,000 facelift after town council chiefs submitted a planning application including toilets, a cafe and meeting rooms.

They will be told in March if a bid for cash made to the Heritage Lottery Fund was successful.





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Renovation plan on track

By Tom Pyman
tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

PLANS to regenerate Folkestone seafront have taken a huge step forward as work on renovating the former harbour railway station is set to begin within days.

Bosses at Folkestone Harbour Company have released designs to show what the redeveloped station will look like.

Following the successful renovation of the Harbour Arm in 2015/16, this new work by the company, which is overseeing a multi-million pound project to redevelop the town, is designed to extend the areas accessible to the public.

It will create new access to the Harbour Arm by using the viaduct that carried trains across the harbour as a pedestrian walkway, with the work, carried out by Graham Construction, set to begin this month following preliminary work to repair the structure.

Folkestone Harbour Company spokesperson Peter Bettley said: "The aim is to provide a direct route between the town and the Harbour Arm, via the former railway station platforms, and will ultimately link with a boardwalk along the beachfront towards the Leas Coastal Park.



FUTURE: Bosses have revealed a first glimpse at what the redeveloped Folkestone harbour station will look like

"This will improve connectivity around the harbour itself and help enhance access between the Coastal Park, the Stade and beach areas, the Creative Quarter and other parts of the town centre, anticipating the wider opportunities that the seafront development will bring."

Repairs to the viaduct are almost complete and bosses say the area will shortly be landscaped, with new railings also added.

"A staircase and lift will be constructed to provide access between the viaduct and Harbour Square, adjacent to the fountains," Mr Bettley said.

"Care is being taken to respect the listed status of the structure and to preserve and enhance its heritage value, whilst introducing a function that is relevant to the area's future.

"Similarly, the former railway station, which in the past had become quite neglected, will be renovated to a high standard, surviving features such as the glass canopies will be restored, and the site's heritage as a marine railway terminus will be recognised."

Second arrest in stab probe

Officers investigating a reported double stabbing in Gravesend last year have made a second arrest.

Kent Police was called to an address in St Albans Close at 8pm on December 5, where a man in his 40s and a woman in her 30s had both suffered serious injuries.

A 33-year-old man from Gravesend was arrested the same day on suspicion of assault and remains on bail pending further enquiries.

A 16-year-old boy from Erith has also now been arrested in connection with the incident and bailed until Wednesday, April 12.

Farage warns of revolution

NIGEL Farage has said the "political revolution" that swept Brexit and Donald Trump to victory will reverberate through Europe.

Mr Farage, who lived in Westerham, said there has been a fundamental "change in public attitudes" towards politicians and the media.

It comes after MEP Janice Atkinson said Kent would be a safer place if far-right leader Marine Le Pen wins power in France.

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Fears for future of youth clubs

As Tonbridge council chiefs sell off land to deliver a much-needed medical centre, campaigners tell **Adele Couchman** not enough has been done to safeguard communities using the existing building

CAMPAIGNERS have hit out at the closure of a historic youth club that has operated in Tonbridge for more than 50 years.

The Teen and Twenty Club has been leasing its site in River Lawn Road from Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council since 1966, offering community and sporting facilities such as martial arts and boxing.

But it was announced last week that the council has agreed to sell the building to deliver a new 'state of the art' medical centre to Tonbridge Medical Group, with the youth club set to close on March 31.

The decision follows an extensive review of Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council's assets in the town centre which aimed to identify potential redevelopment opportunities that would benefit the community, improve services and provide financial return.

The new medical centre would replace Tonbridge Medical Group's two current surgeries on Pembury Road and Higham Lane, which are deemed to be no longer fit for purpose with the continued expansion of the practice.

Mark Hood, of the West Kent Green Party, has started a petition opposing the closure, which is calling for a halt to the sale of the Teen and Twenty Club before a public consultation is held.

He told KoS: "The council is essentially taking away a facility that has been used by lots of children, and the future of the different clubs that operate inside the building have been jeopardised.

"They're simply out there to make a profit and to hell with the consequences.

"It used to be great, I went to playgroup there in the '70s and lots of different teenagers and young people in the town used to use it.

"It was a big youth club, but now there are very few facilities for young people."

Although the council says it will be supporting groups using the building to find alternative facilities - with some groups having already made plans to move to The Tonbridge Youth Hub in Avebury Avenue - Mr Hood says some of the clubs will struggle to find alternative premises.

"The council have been in contact with some of the clubs - some of them have been helped and some of them haven't," he said.

"But the Teen and Twenty Club was very reasonably priced and there is the fear that prices will be increased at other venues in the town.

"The council have offered The Tonbridge Youth Hub, but some of the other clubs like the youth martial arts club, the boxing club, table tennis and narcotics anonymous will not be able to use their facilities there.



HISTORIC: The Teen and Twenty Club has been leasing its site in River Lawn Road, Tonbridge, since 1966, but is now set to be replaced by a health centre



CHANGE: The building hosts a number of sports clubs, including boxing

"The table tennis club has had to move out of Tunbridge Wells, which is just ludicrous, and three of the clubs haven't even found a new premises."

It is understood some of the clubs could be moving to the Angel Centre - a council-owned building leased out by a leisure trust.

But Mr Hood said the centre is expensive to hire for many of the community groups.

Wayne Smith, who runs boxing at the Teen and Twenty Club, added: "I grew up in that building where I went to play school, karate club and youth club.

"I started my business at the club delivering boxing sessions for fours years up until Christmas, where we were told to find alternative premises due to greedy councillors wanting to make a few quid selling the site.

"That place is for the community, there isn't anything else in Tonbridge."

Leader of the Tonbridge and Malling Liberal Democrats Trudy Dean said the closure was a "double whammy" for the closure of youth services in the area.

"In recent years, there has been so many cuts to youth services from Kent County Council's budget and now it seems the borough council are cutting their services as well," she told KoS.

"This is a very difficult time for local authorities, and they are having trouble delivering the statutory services given the budgets the government has given them.

"But whatever youth services councils provide, they generally repay councils more than what they spend as they keep young people out of trouble and deliver a range of educational services for them.

"KCC cut its youth budget four years ago, so countywide we are delivering services from a very limited number of hubs.

"Asides from the club in Averbury Avenue, there is only one other youth hub in Tonbridge and Malling and that is in Snodland.

"It's important Teen and Twenty are able to relocate somewhere in the Tonbridge area to retain services for young people."

But MP for Tonbridge and Malling Tom Tugenhadt said there was a need for a new medical centre in the town.

He said: "I'm very pleased that the investment in the town's local services are going ahead as there is an awful lot of need for increased GP provision.

"It appears as if a lot of the clubs will be moving to the Angel Centre and I'm confident the council will find space for them elsewhere."

Negotiations for the sale of the Teen and Twenty Club site to be used by the Tonbridge Medical Group are now at an advanced stage.

The project will be taken forward by the specialist healthcare property developer and investor Assura, which will acquire the site, construct the medical centre and then lease it to Tonbridge Medical Group.

Responding this week, council leader Nicolas Heslop told KoS: "The building on River Lawn is owned by the council and is currently leased by the Teen and Twenty Club to run a facility for young people.

"As part of the review of council assets, we have been in discussions with the trustees and club committee for the last two years, appraising them of the possible redevelopment of the site.

"In November 2016 we issued a formal letter that the building was to be returned to us on March 31 to which the club was agreeable and accepted.

"The Teen and Twenty Club gave notice to all their users in December that the building would be closing on March 31.

"Of the all the existing groups that regularly hire the club, only one is still to find an alternative venue.

"Others have relocated to other suitable premises such as the KCC Youth Hub in Avebury Avenue and various community halls in the town.

"The council will of course help the one remaining club to find alternative premises if needed.

"We believe that plans to revitalise the building and provide a new medical centre will bring benefits for the whole community and will be another important contribution to the regeneration of Tonbridge town centre."

Tragic tot's parents have 'saved lives' in fight for vaccine against meningitis

Helen Whately MP hails bravery of Neil and Jenny Burdett, who said the government has done "absolutely nothing" for their campaign - a year on from death of their daughter Faye

CAMPAIGNING by the parents of tragic toddler Faye Burdett who died from meningitis last Valentine's Day has "saved lives", their MP has said.

Neil and Jenny Burdett this week slammed the government for doing "absolutely nothing" in their fight against the infection, one year after the death of their two-year-old daughter.

Faye's plight over a matter of days 12 months ago sparked a nationwide petition which received more than 820,000 signatures, calling on the government to vaccinate all children, not just newborn babies.

The parents, who live in Maidstone, also claimed their own MP, the Conservative Helen Whately, had not done enough in terms of campaigning.

Speaking to KoS in response to the comments this week, Mrs Whately said: "I met Neil and Jenny Burdett a year ago, just after Faye died - her toys were still neatly arranged in the corner.

"I was struck by their bravery and determination to make something good come out of tragedy and wanted to do everything I could to help.

"I supported their campaign to give the meningitis B vaccine to as many children as possible, and I understand their frustration that progress has been slow."

The Faversham and Mid Kent MP brought the issue to the House of Commons, where she told then-prime minister David Cameron she was proud Britain was the first country in the world to vaccinate all babies under 12 months old.

However, the government was advised by the independent Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisations that it would not be cost-effective to give the vaccine to older children - advice it is legally obliged to comply with.

Since then, another independent panel of experts has examined how the cost-effectiveness of vaccines is calculated, which could make a difference to the guidance, when the report is eventually published.

Mrs Whately, who sits on the health select committee, says she has been urging the government to publish this report as soon as possible.

"Decisions about how the limited resources of the NHS should be used are never easy – if we spend money on meningitis B vaccines, we can't spend it on another disease – but people deserve to know the basis on which these decisions are made, and to have a chance to challenge them," she added.

"As well as pressing the health minister on the vaccination eligibility last year, I called for a campaign to raise awareness of meningitis.

"Many people just look out for a rash, not knowing that actually by the time the rash appears, you may well be too late.

"The Burdetts' campaign has done so much to raise awareness of meningitis, and that in itself will have already saved lives."

Speaking earlier this week, Mr Burdett said the decision not to extend the vaccine to more age groups was "insulting and devastating" and that he has heard nothing since appearing before MPs on the petitions committee last March.

"Children under five are vulnerable to meningitis and they can't tell you exactly what is happening," he said.

"They are solely reliant on their parents and carers to spot that something is wrong.

"We have been through something so terrible and we thought if we could stop it happening to other families, that's what we wanted to do.

"But since going to parliament, we've heard nothing.

"If nobody in parliament is going to take any notice and do something, who else is there?

"The government is being complacent and we feel badly let down. There is just this massive hole that children are falling into.

"We feel like we were ushered out of the building and that was that. It's all been brushed under the carpet.

"The MPs there said they would keep pushing for an awareness campaign but we've heard nothing, not even from our own MP.

"It's not acceptable and it's not fair because children are still dying."

The grief felt by the Burdetts is made worse by the fact that Faye's meningitis was mistaken for a virus.

She was sent home from Maidstone Hospital but returned seven hours later.

Mr Burdett, 38, said an investigation is still ongoing into what happened at the hospital but criticised the process which sees hospitals carry out their own investigations when things go wrong.

He added: "Every day we miss her, we talk about her. There's a huge hole in our lives that is never going to be filled.

"But we're also proud of her - because of the petition and because for 11 days she fought meningitis against the odds. That shows her strength and her fight."

Mr Burdett, a lorry driver, and his beautician wife, Jenny, 36, spent every day at Faye's hospital bedside.

"She could hear and she could react," Mr Burdett said.

"Every morning I would sit with her and she would squeeze my finger.

"Once, she opened her eyes and she looked around. She mouthed the word 'mummy'. We never heard her voice again because of the ventilator."

The couple made the heartbreaking decision to switch off Faye's life support after her body was ravaged by sepsis, caused by meningitis, and doctors told them her chance of survival was minimal.

Mr and Mrs Burdett had already signed forms consenting to the amputation of both Faye's legs at the hips, one complete arm and the other arm just below the elbow.

"She had fought so hard. Turning off the machine was the hardest decision we have ever had to make but it was the right thing to do. We've never regretted that decision," Mr Burdett said.

The Burdetts spent the anniversary of Faye's death quietly at home in Derby Road, visiting her gravestone and lighting a candle as they do "every night".

The father added: "Faye was a very happy girl who loved to run around. She loved painting and was very clever for her age, she was so bright and determined.

"Faye loved curry, I would make her chicken tikka masala and she loved it. She was such a happy little girl but that's the thing with meningitis - in the click of a finger, it all changes."





TRAGIC: Photos of two-year-old Faye Burdett before and after contracting meningitis went viral last year, as 820,000 people called for more vaccination

Last April, former public health minister Jane Ellison pledged to launch an awareness campaign for parents on the signs of meningitis and the government agreed to release its cost-modelling for vaccines.

There is concern that the current model does not adequately account for the lifetime costs of caring with somebody left disabled by meningitis.

Bexsero is available on the NHS for babies aged two months, followed by a second dose at four months and a booster at 12 months.

Parents who wish to have older children vaccinated must pay privately.

Mr Burdett also said the government had promised to include a page on meningitis symptoms in the red book given to the parents of newborns, but this had also not yet been done.

A Department of Health spokesman said: "The UK is the first country in the world to have introduced a national Men B vaccination programme using Bexsero.

"We have made important progress, vaccinating more than one million babies since September 2015, in which time the number of cases in infants aged one and under has dropped by 50 per cent."

Public Health England has launched a separate campaign on sepsis.

Meningitis Research Foundation estimates 400 cases of meningitis B among children up to the age of five could have been prevented if they had

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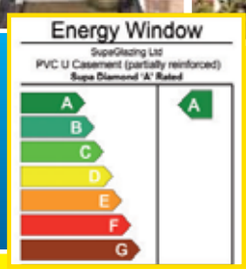


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KOS/15

Honouring the baroness who's breaking down racial barriers

Floella Benjamin, the Baroness of Beckenham, this week became the first living black person to be immortalised in bronze in the UK. We take a look at her impact on Kent and the wider world

By Adele Couchman
Adele.Couchman@archant.co.uk

CALLS are growing for a sculpture of Floella Benjamin to appear in Beckenham after she made history this week by becoming the first living black person in the UK to have a statue.

The much-loved TV presenter, who lived in the town for years and took on the title of Baroness of Beckenham after becoming a Life Peer in the House of Lords in 2010 as a nod to her family's connections to the area, said she was "delighted" after her statue was unveiled at the University of Exeter, where she has recently retired as chancellor.

A former resident of Mackenzie Road in Beckenham, Baroness Benjamin has appeared in several West End shows, served as chair of governors at the Isle of Sheppey Academy and is also vice president of children's charity Barnardos.

Now the university, where she served as leader for 10 years, has immortalised her with a bronze bust in recognition of her achievements.

According to her sculptor, the piece is extremely significant because it is believed to the only existing statue of a living black person in the UK.

"It's sad, but it's quite awesome", explains renowned Devon sculptor Luke Shepherd, who was personally commissioned by Baroness Benjamin for the artwork.

"There are only four statues of publicly named black people in Britain - and three of them are deceased."

The existing three statues commemorate Nelson Mandela, pioneering nurse Mary Seacole and Manche Masemola - a South African Christian martyr.

Throughout his 35 years of sculpting famous faces, Mr Shepherd has created bronze portrait busts from the likes of comedian Billy Connolly to political statesmen, including the likes of former Speaker of the House of Commons and Labour politician George Thomas.

"I think the statue being one-of-a-kind is a reflection of how difficult it is to have status as a black person in this country," he told KoS.

"Lots of sports people don't have a memorial of them, and lots of black people living in the UK are not seen as the sort of people to be commemorated in this way.

"Most of the people I have sculpted have been politicians or people that have reached high levels in their life, and it's sad that black people aren't recognised in that way.



INSPIRATIONAL: Floella Benjamin took the title of Baroness of Beckenham

"There is a statue of a black woman in Stockwell (Lambeth, south London) but the statue is not of a named person who has a voice in the House of Lords like Floella."

Trinidad-born, Lady Benjamin moved to Beckenham in the 1960s. When she first arrived in England, she recalls how she and her five brothers and sisters frequently had to deal with racial prejudice.

Upon being introduced to the House of Lords in 2010, in her maiden speech Lady Benjamin told of being spat on and told to go home.

Later, she would write the 1995 memoir Coming to England - which describes her journey from Trinidad to London as a ten-year-old and the adversity she would overcome.

The 67-year-old first earned her claim to fame by starring in major musicals, including Jesus Christ Superstar and Black Mikado.

But it was in the 1970s when Baroness Benjamin become a household name, where she is best known for presenting children's television shows Play School and Play Away.

A prominent children's rights campaigner, she lobbied the government to introduce a minister for children and also set up Touching Success - an organisation aimed at inspiring youngsters from disadvantaged backgrounds to achieve success in their lives.

Becoming a chancellor at the University of Exeter in 2006, the presenter and actress is known for hugging students at graduation, rather offering the traditional handshake.

After ten years as a chancellor, she carried out her last graduation ceremony in December.





HONOURED: The statue of Baroness Benjamin was unveiled at the University of Exeter this week, where she served as chancellor for 10 years.

WARMTH: The sculpture includes her hands to represent the warm handshake she offers graduates.

Mr Shepherd explains: "The university got in touch with me and I was personally commissioned by Floella for the work.

"All of the other artists had said how they were going to sculpt Floella, but I said I would shape the sculpture as her personality imposed on me.

"Floella often hugs her students when they graduate and gives them a big hand shake.

"Hands are a big part of my portraits and think Floella really liked that."

Work on the sculpture began in the summer of 2016, when the first sitting took place in Baroness Benjamin's south London residence.

In total, 10 individual sittings - each taking around 90 minutes - took place over a period of four months to produce the clay sculpture, which weighed 60kg.

The final sculpture was then finished in Mr Shepherd's studio in south Devon.

"She was very charismatic, possessed such strong feeling and had real integrity," he said.

"It was interesting because throughout the process she recognised her father coming through, her brother and then her.

"As well as being an ambassador for children's rights, she puts her heart and soul into bringing human qualities back to our lives and reminds us what is truly valuable.

"She cares deeply about encouraging all to have consideration for others, contentment in themselves and confidence to believe that anything is possible.

"There should be a sculpture of her in Beckenham to stand as a monument to the community building qualities she carries."

Speaking after the statue was unveiled this week, Baroness Benjamin said: "Who would have thought? One of my main and most enjoyable duties as chancellor was attending graduation and being able to personally greet each and every student.

"It was such a joy and a privilege to meet so many motivated young people, and I always did my best to inspire them to change the world."

The leader of Bromley Council Stephen Carr declined to comment on the prospect of having a statue of Baroness Benjamin in Beckenham, however ward councillor Mary Cooke told KoS: "We are very proud of Floella's achievements and we are delighted Beckenham is being promoted on all sorts of ways through her work."

Bosses at the Isle of Sheppey Academy were also unavailable for comment this week.

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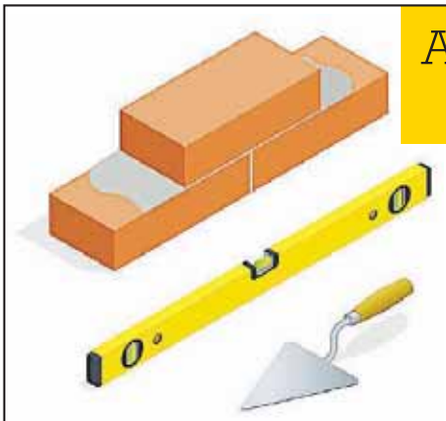
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40,000 still on county's waiting list for housing

Town halls have played down the data, which this week sparked a row between rural campaigners and an MP, but will the government's white paper solve Kent's housing crisis?

By Tom Pyman
Tom.Pyman@archant.co.uk

RURAL campaigners have hit back after an MP suggested they have contributed to a housing crisis which has left hundreds of people on Kent waiting lists for more than a decade.

Figures obtained by KoS through the Freedom of Information Act (FOI), reveal more than 40,000 people are currently on waiting lists for social housing across the 13 borough and district authorities in the county.

Town halls approached by KoS have played down the figures, which represent the total number of people to apply for such housing, which in some areas includes people earning up to £50,000 a year.

Those deemed a priority and actually eligible to bid for the housing make up a smaller fraction of those figures.

Nevertheless, it paints a picture of demand significantly outweighing supply in Kent, just a week after the government admitted the country's housing market was 'broken', with home ownership a "distant dream" for young families, as it unveiled a white paper promising a fresh wave of new-builds.

In Dover, FOI data revealed some 2,253 people were on the council's housing register, with 192 of those remaining on the list for 10 years – a proportion of over eight per cent, which is more than any other district in the county.

Responding to the figures this week, a spokesperson said: "The council uses a 'banding' system to determine the priority that applicants are given for housing.

"Of those waiting more than ten years, over a half (99 out of 192) are in the lowest two bands because they have been assessed as being adequately housed and/or have no local connection.

"Making comparisons with other local housing authorities is not straightforward as many councils have a policy of not accepting this type of household onto their housing registers.

"It would only be possible to make a fair comparison with those councils who operate the same type of priority banding system and the same eligibility criteria.

"The delivery of new housing remains a council priority and we continue to see a number of housing developments coming forward across the district, many of which include the provision of new affordable homes.

"Latest figures show that over 25 per cent of housing completions for 15/16 were affordable."

Conservative MP for Dover, Charlie Elphicke, threw his weight behind the Tory-controlled council, which announced last November that the number of new homes being built was at a 15-year high in the district.



CRITICAL: MP Charlie Elphicke



CRISIS: While not all are deemed a priority, hundreds have been on council waiting lists for more than a decade

He insisted the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE), which won a legal battle to stop a large housing development on a beauty spot in Farthingloe last year, had to shoulder some of the blame for the county's high waiting figures.

"Social housing is really important because we need to help people to get into a new home as soon as we can," he said.

"What's really encouraging is that the council has focussed on bringing forward more affordable social housing and that will help people on the waiting list in Dover and Deal to find a home that is suitable for their needs.

"Everyone knows that the CPRE is against all development and their opposition presents a real problem in bringing forward homes for first time buyers and those waiting for social housing.

"I am doing all I can to make sure we get the housing the district needs but the CPRE is fighting almost every development and that makes it so much harder."

However, the CPRE rubbished Mr Elphicke's claims and insisted it was a lack of delivery from developers after securing planning permission that was to blame for a housing shortage in Kent.

The campaign's Kent director, Hilary Newport, told KoS: "It's simply not the case that CPRE says no to everything – we want development to help regenerate areas and minimise the urban sprawl.

"You don't do that by loosening planning constraints, you do that by tightening them.

"Since 1947 we have had a strong and good planning system that has protected the British countryside so we escaped the worst of the urban sprawl.

"But since 2004 successive governments have eroded those planning controls – it's not the lack of planning permission, it's a failure to deliver.

"Half a million planning permissions have not been delivered and that gap is growing.

"The problem is developers are not held to account and councils have their hands tied."

Ms Newport rejected suggestions that soaring demand would mean developing on green sites was inevitable in the near future.

"We've always said there's still a lot of brownfield land to go, probably enough for a million homes,

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Continued from page 19

and typically these are urban areas where there is access to services," she said.

"There is no doubt we need to build affordable houses but you can't leave it to the open market - commercial developers have no incentive or desire to build council houses."

In Medway, the figures obtained by KoS were even more staggering, with a total of 21,980 on the waiting list, with 1,354 of those joining before January 1, 2007.

When challenged, housing bosses at the unitary authority pointed out the register includes people who have lived in Medway for two years, earn less than £50,000 and own assets worth less than £50,000.

On what the council describes as the "active housing register", which includes those eligible to bid for homes, there were 5,829 applicants at the start of 2017 – 404 of which were classed as "exceptional priority", meaning their bids would be assessed before others on the register.

A spokesperson added: "Anyone can apply to be on our housing register and this is in line with national guidance.

"However, we assess everyone's circumstances and prioritise those with greater housing needs; this includes people who are homeless or have medical needs.

"Only those who are deemed a priority are eligible to bid for social housing properties."

Regardless, leader of the opposition Labour party on the council, Vince Maple, felt the data highlighted an under delivery of homes in Medway over a number of decades.



FUTURE: Housing minister, Gavin Barwell this week visited Medway Council's Centenary Gardens in Gillingham

"Clearly I am disappointed to see we still have nearly 22,000 people on the waiting list," he told KoS.

"It shows Medway, like so many other boroughs, is in the grips of this housing crisis, and there are not enough homes being built.

"It's also a dramatic figure that well over 1,000 have been on the register for 10 years and that demonstrates that this is not something that has happened overnight, it's the result of 30 to 40 years of under delivering housing.

"It's right and appropriate to recognise that while successive governments [both Labour and Conservative] have not built enough, Labour focussed on ensuring the housing was brought up to a decent standard."

The authority is working to minimise that shortage, however, as housing minister Gavin Barwell this week



SCENIC: Farthingloe, in Dover.



paid a visit to Centenary Gardens in Gillingham – one of the largest council-built energy efficient bungalow sites in the UK.

"Medway is leading the way in efforts to fix our broken housing market and making sure that this is a country that works for everyone," Mr Barwell said on Thursday.

Medway Council is also currently consulting on its local plan - a framework used to shape development in the area until 2035 - in which regeneration chiefs intend to grow Medway's population from 276,492 to 330,200 over the next two decades.

That would would require another 30,000 new homes - 25 per cent of which would be affordable housing, bosses say.

With more than half of the 40,000 people on registers in Kent being in Medway, the waiting figures in the west of the county tend to be more modest, with 897 on Tonbridge's register at the start of the year and 755 waiting in Sevenoaks.

In Canterbury, some 2,744 applicants were on the council's waiting list in January, with 43 remaining on the register for a decade.

The housing crisis in Canterbury was surely exacerbated last year when the council was outbid for homes at the former Howe Barracks in the city by the London Borough of Redbridge - some 60 miles away.

A spokesperson for the local authority said: "As with other areas, we find that people apply to join the Housing Needs register for many reasons including wanting to downsize, being overcrowded, seeking independent accommodation and looking to relocate for work.

"Canterbury City Council operates a policy of choice based lettings which allows applicants to choose where they want to live and the type of property they wish to be considered for.

"This can mean that if an applicant wishes to move to a specific location, or wants a particular type of property, they will wait longer to secure an offer of accommodation.

"Since April 2016 we have allocated 285 properties. However, some applicants do resolve their housing situation sooner than we are able to and as such we also provide information about alternative options to applicants such as Help To Buy and securing private rented accommodation."

As well as a lengthy waiting list for social housing, homelessness is a big problem in the city, as Canterbury recently ranked eighth for the highest number of rough sleepers per 1,000 households in England.

Terry Gore is the general manager of the Canterbury-based homeless charity, Catching Lives, and said securing private accommodation was not proving any easier for people in the city.

He told KoS: "People are not necessarily becoming homeless at a faster rate but it's getting harder and harder to get people off the streets once they get there because the waiting lists for all sorts of housing are getting longer and longer and it's just going to get worse.

"Particularly in Canterbury it's very, very difficult to find suitable private rented accomodation in this area because of the costs.

"Finding properly affordable housing is essential, not just for those who are homeless or on benefits, but for so many people on low wages, so they don't have to go without food or miss a bill."

There have been calls for councils to access funding to build homes, with officials suggesting that the government doesn't understand the housing needs of local authorities based on a national formula better than the town halls themselves.

In the government's white paper, however, housing chiefs said: "We're giving councils and developers the tools they need to build more swiftly, and we expect them to use them.

"Local authorities should not put up with applicants who secure planning permission but don't use it.

"And they will have nowhere to hide from this government if they fail to plan and deliver the homes this country needs."

■ **What do you think? Send your views on the county's housing crisis to editorial@kosmedia.co.uk**

WAITING LIST FIGURES IN KENT AND MEDWAY AS OF JANUARY

AREA	TOTAL NUMBER ON REGISTER	NUMBER WAITING FOR 10 YEARS
Ashford	1,497	5
Canterbury	2,744	43
Dartford	1,054	2
Dover	2,253	192
Gravesham	3,491	65
Maidstone	619	3
Medway	21,980	1,354
Sevenoaks	755	0
Shepway	1,477	53
Swale	1,185	2
Thanet	2,047	0
Tonbridge & Malling	897	0
Tunbridge Wells	964	11
TOTAL	40,963	1,730



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Celebrating how Biggin Hill formed first line of defence

A 100-year-old pilot took to the skies as the airport marked a century of service

By Simon Allin
simon.allin@archant.co.uk

IN the dark days of the Second World War, when German bombs rained down on London and the south east, Bromley's Biggin Hill airport formed part of the first line of defence against the Luftwaffe.

The airfield was one of the commanding bases during the Battle of Britain, and the squadrons of Spitfires and Hurricanes that flew from the base are thought to have destroyed 1,400 enemy aircraft.

Now a commercial venture, the historic airfield began its centenary celebrations on Monday with a special flight for 100-year-old VIPs who contributed to the war effort.

The airport's history began in 1916 when it was requisitioned by the War Office and a military camp was established to undertake experiments in wireless communications.

On February 13, 1917, the Royal Flying Corps transferred to Biggin Hill from their long-time headquarters at Joyce Green, Dartford, and it became part of the London Air Defence Area, protecting the capital from attacks by Zeppelins and Gotha Bombers.

The custodian of St George's RAF Chapel of Remembrance on Main Road told KoS: "The site was chosen due to its elevation. At Joyce Green, they had a lot of trouble because of the mist off the Thames.

"Biggin Hill is 600ft above sea level. It was known as 'Biggin on the Bump'.

"We had the first biplanes. The first squadron was 141 squadron in 1918, which defended London from the first German bombers in the First World War.

"It started life as a wireless experimentation establishment, developing air-to-air and ground-to-air communications, and then we had the early development of listening devices before radar was established.

"It was involved in developing technology to capture the incoming sounds of aircraft – some of which was used during the Second World War."





HERITAGE: Above, Churchill visits. Photo: Bromley Historic Collection. Ray Roberts (right) took to the sky on Monday. Photo: Keith Larby

It was during the Second World War that the airport played its most important role, acting as a base for several squadrons of Spitfires and Hurricanes.

Before the war, many people feared cities would be indefensible against bombers - epitomised in Stanley Baldwin's statement "the bomber will always get through" - but Biggin Hill's pilots helped prove them wrong.

"It was a vital part of London's defence," the custodian continued. "It was the main airfield in the south east. If you look at the map and the position it is in, it was one of the main airfields defending London during the Blitz."

The airport's prominence came at a cost - German aircraft attacked it 12 times between August 1940 and January 1941, destroying buildings and killing 39 people on the ground.

"It was bombed quite a few times during the Second World War as they tried to knock out Biggin Hill as well as Croydon and Henley. Quite a few were killed on the ground as well as the pilots.

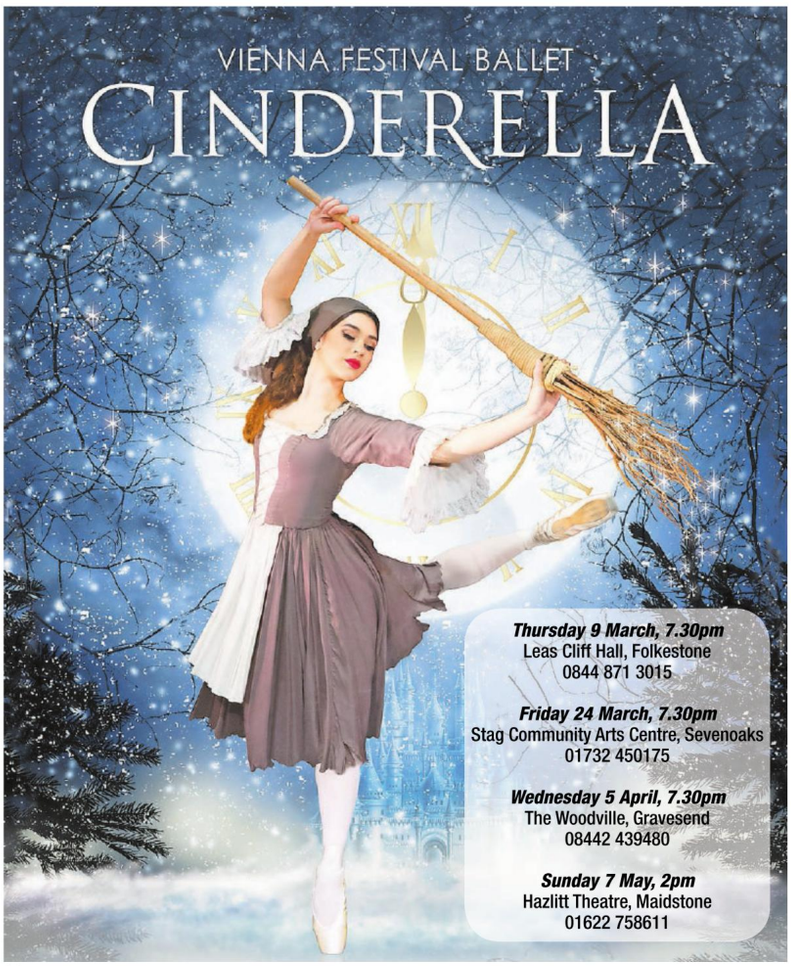
"The pilots and officers were billeted out. If they all lived in the mess and it was hit by a bomb it would have killed a lot of people, so they were spread about the area.

"They lived in big houses. They would requisition a house – it could be a stately home type of place – just so they were safe. If a house was hit, three or four pilots would be killed."

After the war ended, Biggin Hill became a base for both regular and reserve fighter squadrons flying Spitfires, Meteors and Hunters, and served as an officer selection centre for the RAF.

When Croydon Airport was finally closed in 1959, RAF Biggin Hill began to accept civilian flights alongside its role as a rapid reaction station.

RAF operations ceased in 1974, and since then the airport has gradu-





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VITAL: Biggin Hill airport provided crucial protection from the Luftwaffe

ally grown to become an international gateway to Greater London and the City for business, corporate and general aviation.

The three VIPs who took off from the airport on Monday provide a living link to the airport's illustrious past.

Among them was Ray Roberts, from Margate - a 100-year-old former RAF pilot who took to the skies in a Spitfire.

He used a walking aid on the runway to take his place in the twin-seat aircraft, while fellow centenarians Lily Osborne and Trudy Baxter flew in a Learjet 75.

Mr Roberts, who was flown by Captain Peter Kynsey, joined the RAF in 1940 and trained as a pilot before being injured that year when his parachute failed to fully open after he bailed out of a Spitfire.

He became a proud member of the Caterpillar Club, a group of people who had bailed out of a stricken aircraft and survived to tell the tale. His injuries forced him to quit as a fighter pilot.

And in 1941 he joined the Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA) and spent the rest of the Second World War delivering aircraft to service units direct from the factory.

As the Spitfire roared in the skies above Kent and London, Mr Roberts' daughter, Lyndi Roberts, said: "He is just amazed to be given the opportunity. He has been going through his old logbooks.

"Since he found out he was going to be flown in a Spitfire, he kept saying he cannot wait to get up and see the Earth, looking down. He said it takes him back."

The airport's community engagement manager Colin Hitchins said the link to the past would always be there, but the airport is also looking towards the future.

"The significant part now is the number of jobs that are being created locally," he added.

"It is the second biggest employer in the borough, and with Bombardier moving in that is 300-plus jobs being created.

"There is a big legacy here. There are plans for a college on the site for future engineers, and the plans are going very well."



W H G h o

George Cohen, who played right-back for England in 1966, managed Tonbridge Angels and now lives in Tunbridge Wells, made a pledge this week to help aid research into dementia in ex-footballers

KENT-BASED World Cup winner George Cohen is willing to donate his brain to science to aid research into dementia in ex-footballers.

A study published on Wednesday found that footballers who repeatedly head the ball can end up suffering from dementia.

Cohen, who played right-back when England won the World Cup at Wembley in 1966, and former Manchester United midfielder Pat Crerand have both agreed to have their brains examined after death to aid further research.

Speaking in the Daily Mirror, Cohen, who lives in Tunbridge Wells and previously managed Tonbridge Angels, said: "Whatever will help, I mean why not? It's no use to me anymore at that stage.

"I suppose it's all down to the relatives - my wife Daphne says she wouldn't mind, and I certainly wouldn't mind.

"I wouldn't be aware of it so I don't see a reason for me to not want to, as long as my relatives are okay with it.

"It might not be as easy as that for some people and for some relatives, because it's not an easy time when you lose someone.

"If they've found there is a link to the illness then someone donating their brain is a good thing if it can help. I'm sure others would be happy to do it too."

On Wednesday Dawn Astle, daughter of former England and West Brom striker Jeff Astle, who died of a degenerative brain disease in 2002 aged 59, said a lack of action from football authorities was "indefensible and disgraceful."

Her response came after a small study in a group of retired footballers revealed blows to the head as a potential cause of dementia.

The brains of six of the 14 retired players involved in the research - none of whom have been identified - underwent post-mortem examinations and four were found to have chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) pathology, while all six had signs of Alzheimer's disease.

CTE can cause dementia and, like Alzheimer's, is characterised by a build-up of abnormal tau protein in the brain.

The rate of CTE detected in the footballers' brains was greater than the 12 per cent average found in a previous study which looked at 268 brains from the general population.

And Cohen admitted he was not surprised that the heading of footballs had an adverse effect on the brain, as well as calling for a ban on under-10s heading the ball.

He added: "Think of those long, defensive headers - you put your neck and back into it all - but it's the head that takes the punishment.

"Over the years, god knows how many times you head the ball. Years ago these heavy balls were 14-to-16oz but with water on them they went up 25 per cent in weight.

"If you're standing in a wall and you take that on the side of the head, you feel it immensely - it's not nice. It doesn't surprise me that over the years people are taking this issue more and more seriously.

"There's going to have to be something done with youngsters heading the ball.

"They are still just kids, usually under 10, when they start going to football schools and clubs, and they stand maybe two-to-three feet from each other heading the ball.

"At that early stage of development it might be a good idea not to have the ball headed, particularly the full-sized balls.

"I think under a certain age it would be a good idea to not to do it. It should be something that's agreed by medics, and I would agree with that.

"But it's a very worrying situation at the moment because you cannot play football without heading the ball."



LEGEND: George Cohen is willing to donate his brain to science.

Crerand, who was part of United's European Cup winning side in 1968, added: "How do you improve a situation like this? You're never going to know how to improve it without more testing and research.

"At the end of the day, if [donating your brain] is going to make a difference - then do it."





EXCITING: Stand By Me goes through the history of The Drifters via recollections of former members on a big screen

Drifting through decades in musical show Stand By Me

Former Drifter Michael Williams shares his experiences with infamous band...

LAST year was the finale for The Drifters after six decades of tours, shows, and fans. But from the band's end, comes their history, and a show titled Stand By Me, which is told through anecdotes of former band members on screen.

Stand by Me is the phenomenal musical history of a group that helped to define Atlantic Records, inspired early rock and roll and was a forerunner to both the black music movement in 1950s America and even early Motown, and is making its way to Tunbridge Wells.

Michael Williams, was a long-standing member of the band having performed for 12 years.

He was originally scouted by Tina Tredwell, the band's management at the time, while working in a nightclub in New York.

He tells KoS: "She asked me to audition, and I couldn't believe it. It was fantastic, I rushed home to tell my parents as they were mine and their favourite group. When I was asked to join the group there was no question about whether or not I would say yes, it was assumed that I would. I spent a year as an understudy to learn the back catalogue of songs - there are so many - and then I became a permanent line-up member."

Speaking of the band's monumental history, and what the best aspects of that are, Mr Williams says he thinks the different characters are what has made the band so great.

He said: "I have been so lucky to talk to some of the characters that have come and gone. And members such as Ben E King, and Clyde McPhatter have helped The Drifters create music that sends people crazy. Though the music is old it's still fresh too and people of all ages and generations can enjoy it."

The band continued from when it was formed in 1953 to 2016, but members came and went often.

Mr Williams explains: "Clyde McPhatter formed the band, he only stayed for a year because he got drafted into the military, and this became the norm. The band lost many members to the military. In 1958 the whole line-up was fired because the management didn't agree with them at the time. That's the way it's always been for the band, some people get fired, some choose to leave, some even leave and come back again, but in the end the band has remained because the legacy it left behind is so strong."

When asked what his favourite Drifters song is, the singer replies that it's a "really hard question."

But goes on to elaborate, saying: "It changes quite often. It was Love Games for a long time but I also love You're More Than A Number because I used to sing it a lot as a kid and when I'm on stage singing it, it brings back memories. But I guess if I had to pick, I would say Love Games."

Mr Williams hopes fans learn a lot from the show, adding: "We get to talk to a lot of fans but not many knew the story behind The Drifters or about the ups and downs, the trials and tribulations, so I really want them to leave knowing the history.

"The Drifters are one of the biggest groups of all time, I want people to go away loving the songs but also loving that they now know the history surrounding them."

Stand By Me is coming to Tunbridge Wells' Assembly Hall on March 24.

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HELEN, mid 50s naughty lady seeks some fun times with gent any age. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424493**

CAROL, mid 50s lady, young at heart, attractive and sexy (so I'm told)! Give me a call if you are a gent with GSOH. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424783**

MARY, professional mature lady, loves life, very sociable and fun, seeks gent for good conversation and happy times. All calls and texts answered. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424775**

BRUNETTE lady, 70, slim, sophisticated, size 10, kind of like Helen Mirren as a brunette, lives near Tunbridge Wells, WLTM a genuine, hopefully family oriented gentleman, for genuine friendship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424877**

SARAH, mature feminine lady, kind caring but still has a sensual side, hoping to meet like minded, confident, non smoking gent with GSOH, looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424777**

GENUINE lady, 67, slim, GSOH, caring, honest, active, likes most things in life, days out, countryside, animals, long walks, visiting interesting places, cooking and holidays, WLTM a caring, honest male with GSOH, 67-73, with similar interests. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 423289**

Men Seeking

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.55 per minute plus your phone company's access charge. Texts cost £1.50 per message received. mydate24

CARING sociable, GSOH, slim, attractive, married gent, 67, feels discarded and lonely, seeks likewise lady 60+ for trips out, dining etc. **Text only. Mailbox: 5082918**

SIX foot guy, mature, looking for someone special to spend some quality time with. Please leave me a message I would love to hear from you! **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420163**

CALLING all ladies 40+ who would like to be wined, dined and romanced by attractive gent, 54 years please call or text me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425943**

JOHN, mid sixties widower, cultured and interesting, solvent with own home. WLTM lady 55+ for genuine companionship. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425939**

GENUINE single gent, 55yrs, seeks friendship hopefully leading to true love with lady 35-55, looks unimportant. Please call or text me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425937**

SOLVENT gentleman, young 70s, loves life seeking a lady of any age to spoil and pamper, take on holidays, wine and dine. Genuine advertiser. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425935**

RICHARD, 64, n/s, from Kent, medium build, clean shaven, likes classic cars, days out, meals out, boot fares, most things, would like to meet a lady for company and to share each others interests. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424207**

SUE, outgoing lady, enjoys life, likes meals, holidays, WLTM mature gentleman to share interests and spend quality time together. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424669**

CLARE, 41, attractive, lovely eyes, nice figure, smoker, likes beach walks, socialising, occasional gigs, WLTM a nice gent, any age over 40, for wining and dining, to be my soul mate. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424595**

NAUGHTY curvy 46yr old lady, outgoing and bubbly with a naughty side and lots of banter, WLTM chap 30+. If you are married even better. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424543**

JULIE, 53yrs, tall slim dark haired lady, sociable and fun loving. New to the area so WLTM men friends for fun, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424497**

ANGELA, 48yrs, seeks male companion for nights out, dining, maybe more. ACA or text me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424495**

PROFESSIONAL gentleman, 64, widowed, own house, loves holidays abroad, reading, eating out, eating in and shows, WLTM a lady of similar age to share interests and happy times together hopefully leading to lasting relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425787**

MALE, 70s, would like to meet slim lady 60 plus. **Text only. Mailbox: 4505135**

HELLO, mature gentleman looking for a lady who is caring, likes holidays, karaoke, meals out, country walks and cinema. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425401**

GUY, 50, 6ft tall, calm and kind, good company, seeking lovely lady for good times and fun and loving. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425369**

BARRY, 50, 6ft 4ins, well built, divorced gent, looking to date calm and kind lovely lady. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421195**

CHRIS, 49yrs honest gent seeks lady 45-55 for socialising, friendship, maybe leading to romance. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425345**

PETER, sincere solvent gent 70s seeks lady to wine dine, foreign travel, all expenses paid. I would love a traveling companion. Genuine advertiser. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425343**

MALCOLM, 60 something gent, own hair and teeth, GSOH, genuine and Kind WLTM sincere lady to wine and dine. Please call. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425335**

PROFESSIONAL gent, 44yrs, tall, attractive and genuine. Seeks genuine feminine lady for genuine romance. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425333**

PIERS, 56yrs, romantic gent WLTM lady to wine, dine, spoil. I'm kind, caring, generous pls call me. Single mums welcome. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425331**

GENUINE gentleman, family minded, kind, generous seeks lady 55-75 for wining, dining and wine and laughter. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425329**

NICE looking 55 year old male WLTM sincere lady, any age, for friendship, outings, holidays abroad etc. Love the sun. **Text only. Mailbox: 4922399**

DENTAL practitioner, 44, 6ft, slim, athletic build, thick dark hair, blue eyes, loves sports, seeks slim feminine sporty lady. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425087**

EDWARD, 77, looking for a companion South East area of Kent, for holidays, days out, social events, and lots more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 423039**

TALL, lively old boy, into red wine, garlic and Radio 3, seeks tactile lady for company and jolly jaunts. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425021**

MALE, 58, wishes to meet attractive female, into music, live bands, cinema and some sports, for nights out socialising and maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424979**

HI I'm Darren, down to earth guy, lives in Kent, likes Marbaia, looking for someone special to meet and have a laugh with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424951**

GARETH handsome 40's pilot, strong tall build, seeks daytime discreet passion with lady 30-65. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414421**

NICK, mature male, builder, tattoos, plenty of money, looking for discreet meets, no stings in the Kent area. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424787**

RETIRED, intelligent, Broadstairs widower, GSOH, medium height and build, seeks slim lady for friendship and companionship initially. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424697**

59YR old male, likes country walks, pub lunches, seeks lady for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424685**

MALE 50 seeks mature, home loving lady, 60 plus who enjoys cosy nights in. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424683**

MARK 48, slim, fit, GSOH, looking for loyal partner for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424679**



MARTIN trustworthy, warm hearted, loving, reliable male, 45, 6ft, medium build, young at heart, GSOH, seeks female, 50-60 for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424681**

CARING 55yr old male, widower, 6ft 3ins, WLTM lady, 40-55 for fun and laughter, maybe happy ever after. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424677**

COLIN, 56, 6ft, medium build, clean and tidy with a tidy beard, I'm after some TLC with no strings adult fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422359**

ANDY, tall attractive male, looking for a naughty female, for fun with no strings attached. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424295**

MALE, 52, quiet nature, likes coastal walks, cinema, reading, WLTM lady for friendship and maybe romance. East Kent area. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424211**



JOHN, 70, widower, lives in Broadstairs, Kent, slim, fit, active, young at heart, kind, caring and loving, likes country/beach walks, holidays, days out, theatre, eating out, music, animals, WLTM slim, attractive lady, to share interests and nice times together. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424043**

LIVELY old boy, OHAC, near sea in Folkestone, into red wine, garlic and Radio 3, seeks lady companion/lover, 58-68 yo. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422621**

HELLO my name is Paul, 43, 5ft9, from Sittingbourne in Kent, looking for someone to have some fun with and see where it goes! **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422905**

GENTLEMAN, 76yrs old, clean-shaven with a good head of hair and a smart dresser, hoping to meet lady for friendship/relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 423645**

Gay Seeking

Join our Gay online service **FREE** visit: **localgaydate.co.uk**

MALE, 40s, seeking gym buddy to attend DW gym in the early evenings, similar age. Margate. **Text only. Mailbox: 5779191**

SIMON, 29yrs, gay curious, seeking older gent for new experiences, must be discreet as I live at home. **Text Only: Mailbox: 4196422**

GAY guy, friendly with a GSOH, likes sport and art, WLTM similar guy for a relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425563**

Friends

FEMALE seeking genuine straight female for daytrips, out to meet socially for lunch/coffee. **Text only to Mailbox No:4748240**

SEEKING ladies for good company, socialising and a bit of fun, BBW local to Kent, get in touch and lets start having fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413623**

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Legendary performer Lulu has announced string of Kent dates

By Emily King

emily.king@archant.co.uk



CHARITY: Lulu last performed in Kent with the Military Wives Choir.

DUE to demand, legendary singer Lulu has confirmed she will embark on the biggest tour of her career, and she is coming to a host of Kent venues.

The All About The Music Tour will see the Grammy-nominated singer perform hits such as *Shout*, *To Sir With Love*, *Relight My Fire* and *The Man Who Sold The World*, amongst many others.

After a ten year period of relative inactivity on the live scene, the release of Lulu's 2015's self-penned *Making Life Rhyme* album, sparked the new touring period in November and December 2017.

Lulu said: "I absolutely love playing live and can't wait to be out on the road again in autumn this year. My life has always been all about the music, so come and join me again or for the first time and let's have a great night of music."

The singer last performed in Kent at Tunbridge Wells' Assembly Hall in February 2016 as part of a collaboration with the Military Wives Choir.

Lulu teamed up with the choir to release the song *Cry*, of which all proceeds received were donated to the Military Wives Choir Foundation charity.

Before the performance, she said: "Having a different Military Wives Choir join me onstage every night will be a lot of fun. But on a more serious note, later in my life I was diagnosed as having post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and what that did was help me to relate even more with our men and women in the armed forces.

"I realised I would like to do something to help, so we recorded *Cry* and my brother and I rewrote the lyrics to apply specifically to the military."

Her new tour will be at Margate's Winter Gardens on October 5, Tunbridge Wells' Assembly Hall on October 11, Bromley's Churchill Theatre on October 23, Dartford's Orchard Theatre on October 24, and Canterbury's Marlowe Theatre on November 6.

Tickets range between £33 and £43, or VIP tickets are £74.

To book tickets or for more information visit margatewintergardens.com, assemblyhalltheatre.co.uk, churchilltheatre.co.uk, orchardtheatre.co.uk, or marlowetheatre.com

Ballet reimaged for kids



MY First Ballet: Cinderella, a version created especially for children will be at Dartford's Orchard Theatre from April 6 to 8.

For tickets visit orchardtheatre.co.uk

New park jumping for joy

A HUGE trampoline park will be making its way into Orpington next month.

AirJump Trampoline Park, on Lagoon Road will boast a 14,000 square foot site with 1000 square metres of pure trampoline space. The new park will accomodate 60 jumpers per hour and be open seven days a week.

Leith could join Bake Off



TELEVISION cook Prue Leith has said she is "close" to joining Kent's Pul Hollywood on The Great British Bake Off but she has not been told whether she has made the grade. She has had two auditions so far.

Blue note classics at FJC

DRUMMER Pete Carter hits The Folkestone Jazz Club this February 23 with his band .

He's joined by Richard Shepherd on alto saxophone, George Hogg on trumpet, Adrian Fry on trombone, Simon Thorpe on double bass, and Pete Whittaker on the organ.

For tickets call 01303 277175.



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West End sell-out sensation



DREAMBOATS AND PETTICOATS returns to Dartford's Orchard Theatre from March 6-11 to celebrate 10 years of the multi-million selling albums.

For tickets visit the website: orchardtheatre.co.uk.

Sharrock stars in mystery

THE MYSTERY OF THE MURDERED THIEF, an adventure play based on the thrilling classics by E W Hornung, comes to Greenwich Theatre from March 15 to 18.

Bunny is played by Ian Sharrock, who has featured as Jackie Merrick in Emmerdale.

For tickets visit greenwichtheatre.org.uk

Prepare to tackle Beast



KNOWN as The Beast, the world's largest inflatable obstacle course for adults will be at the Betteshanger Park near Deal from May 26-29.

To book visit the website: betteshanger-park.co.uk/beast

Mother's Day at Penshurst

ON MOTHER'S DAY, children can create their own personal Mother's Day gift and hand-made card at Penshurst Place, Tonbridge, leaving mum to explore the beautiful gardens that are bursting back into life at the start of a new flowering season.

Visit penshurstplace.com for information.

You'll be Gutted if you miss this Marlowe play

By Emily King

emily.king@archant.co.uk



GUTTED had its humble beginnings in playwright Sharon Byrne's little house by the sea in Whitstable, and now it's set to have its debut at Canterbury's Marlowe Studio.

The play is a black comedy set in 1980s Dublin. Delores, Breda and Deirdre work in a fish factory and relay the stories of their often mundane lives in the factory staffroom. Through dynamic monologue, pure Irish storytelling and comedy, the women then dramatise the events of a very significant night in their lives.

Speaking to KoS, Ms Byrne, relays how the idea for Gutted comes from her upbringing in Dublin.

She explains: "While living there, I came across young women who were working hard for a living in the local fish factory.

"I didn't know it then, but these women had a huge impact on my life. I'd see them every day walking by my grandparents' house, and tried to imagine what it would be like to be them. They'd walk by my window wearing plastic caps (shower caps), blue coats and Wellington boots, smoking roll-ups and chatting about their day.

"They never stopped chatting and laughing, and they were of all ages ranging from 16 to 50."

Ms Byrne, who supports women's movements, has great admiration for the women she's featured in Gutted.

"The women were the impetus for me to strive for more in my life," she comments. "Not that there was anything wrong with working in a fish factory. I had the utmost respect for these women. Fair play to them. They worked hard and played hard; they were providing for their families. They were tough hard-working women and I admired them.

"But they were stuck in many ways too and seemed contented with the cards that life had dealt them. I wasn't."

Gutted is coming to the Marlowe Studio from February 21 to 23.

For tickets visit marlowetheatre.com.



DEBUT: Sharon Byrne alongside one of the actors in her play



INSPIRATION: The playwright based characters on her youth



'It's been a life-changer,' says Emma Hatcher

How the FODMAP diet helped the blogger manage her irritable bowel syndrome and sensitive gut...

THE TERM 'low FODMAP diet' may leave you scratching your head - but not for much longer, if Emma Hatcher has anything to do with it.

FODMAPs - fermentable, oligosaccharides, disaccharides, monosaccharides and polyols - are types of short-chain carbohydrates that can be tricky to digest, and they can wreak havoc for some people with irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), a common condition associated with digestive symptoms such as bloating, diarrhoea, constipation and cramps.

They can be found in a wide range of foods, including certain fruits, veggies, grains and nuts - onions, garlic and apples are prime examples. But cutting out, or cutting down on key culprits can help - and if anyone can vouch for the effective of a low FODMAP diet it's Hatcher, a long-term sufferer of IBS and a sensitive gut.

"It was a light bulb moment of, 'Oh my God, this could actually really help'," the 23-year-old recalls of her dietician's suggestion to try the plan, following years of cutting out various foods to no effect.

"You don't realise quite how much it affects your life until after your symptoms have gone, and you think, 'Wow, I'm not thinking about when I'm next going to need the bathroom, or what I'm going to eat on my work lunch break today'.



TRANSFORMED: Emma Hatcher says she worries less

"It's been a massive life-changer for me, and by the sounds of it, for a lot of other people out there as well."

Discovering that the information available was minimal - she recalls initially being handed "a very uninspiring, four-page leaflet with a big long list of foods to cut out" - the forward-thinking millennial embarked on a one-woman mission to show that the diet needn't be restrictive.

She's since been a pillar of support for countless others in a similar position, via her brilliantly titled lifestyle blog, She Can't Eat What?! Now, Hatcher's sharing her insights in her debit cookbook, The FODMAP Friendly Kitchen.

Initially "slightly scared" at the lack of resources, Hatcher explains the tome - a colourful smorgasbord of recipes, helpful meal plans and tips - was created with the intent of "distilling" the diet into digestible chunks.

"I wanted to make it easy for other people, to provide them with another resource that's not really science-y but simplifies and relays it from a personal experience.

"Food is a massive part of IBS and dealing with symptoms, but at the same time, there's the anxiety and stress side of things," she elaborates. "There's the question of, 'What am I going to do when I go out to a restaurant with my friends and order food?'

"I was really conscious I wanted to answer some of those questions."

Uni of Kent concerts

TANGO! brings the curtain down on the spring series of lunchtime concerts in the Colyer-Fergusson Hall of the University of Kent in Canterbury.

Tango! takes place on Wednesday March 29 and presents Lydia Cheng (violin), Faith Chan (cello) and Daniel Harding (piano) exploring this sensuous South American ballroom dance.

Visit www.kent.ac.uk/music

Let's go flippin' crazy

PANCAKE DAY races will be held in Gravesend town centre on February 28.

Shops and businesses will come together as individuals or teams on Pancake Day in a bid to win the top prize.

Heats will take place at 12pm and 12.30pm on Shrove Tuesday, allowing people to take part in their lunch hours.

The mayor of Gravesham, Cllr Greta Goatley, will be adjudicating.

Motown magic returns

AFTER a sold out show in 2016, The Magic of Motown is set to return to Margate's Winter Gardens once more on March 25 to liven up 2017.

The Motown tribute concert show boasts: a choreographed cast, 36 million-selling hits, dozens of dazzling costume changes, that Detroit sound.

For tickets visit margatewintergardens.co.uk

Collective street mural

ARTISTS 1717 Alliance will be working with students from Thamesview, St George's and Northfleet Technology College to produce a street art mural to go along the hoarding of Jackson Civil Engineering building works.

The artists are visiting Thamesview School on February 27 to work on the boards, on Rathmore Road, covering the theme of 500 years of Gravesend's river history.

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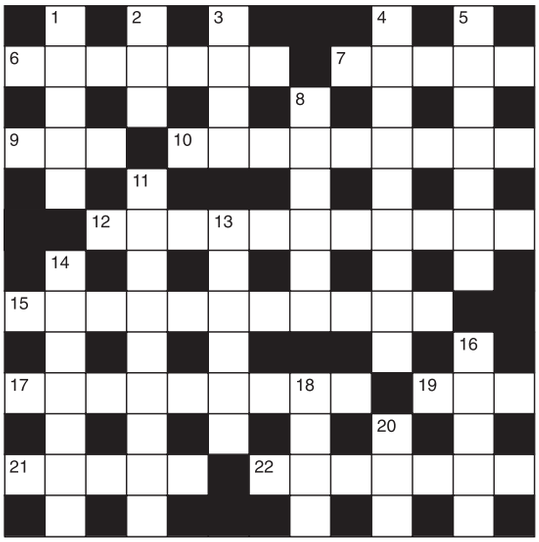
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PUZZLES

DOUBLE CROSSWORD



Quick

Across

6. Glass (7)
7. Daub (5)
9. Levy (3)
10. Ancient (9)
12. Rudeness (11)
15. Suggestion (11)
17. Dog (9)
19. Blend (3)
21. Indolence (5)
22. Make (7)

Down

1. Rustic (5)
2. Recede (3)
3. Prophet (4)
4. Likeness (9)
5. Reap (7)
8. Quantity (6)
11. Inequality (9)
13. Coffin (6)
14. Methodical (7)
16. Toss (5)
18. Merit (4)
20. Uneven (3)

Cryptic

Across

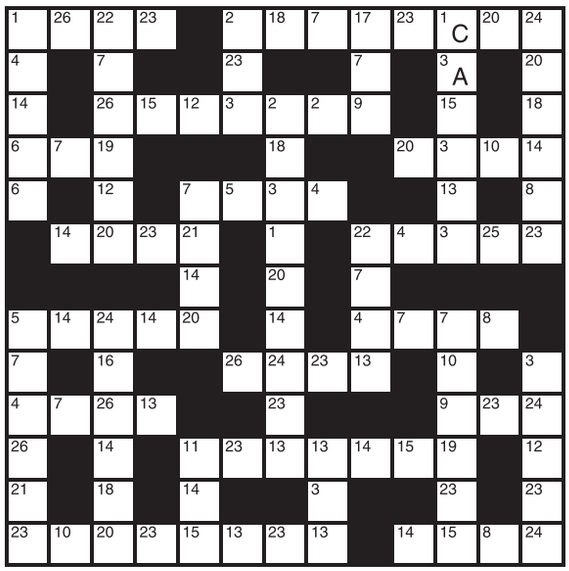
6. Paints the standards (7)
7. Puts one's name down for tokens (5)
9. See 20 Down
10. See 19 Across
12. Protracted torture the old lag may be in for! (4,7)
15. Layers put in cells (7,4)
17. Friend with a place to put the food - and it's tasty (9)
19 and 10Ac. Publican who supplies no drinks, but demands payment (3,9)
21. Pick up bits of information from a different angle (5)
22 and 5Dn. Not losing contact with what the regular correspondent is doing (7,2,5)

Down

1. See 20 Down.
2. You need a crate to perform in the ring (3)
3. River that featured in the war noticeably (4)
4. Criminal producing shocking scare in money-making establishment (9)
5. See 22 Across
8. Keep tight hold of the eggs (6)
11. Life-like drawing of a beam in the doorway (9)
13. English composer of Teutonic origin? (6)
14. How a corpulent brother-in-arms is wounded? (7)
16. Election victories from Georgia in the south (5)
18. Schubert composition incorporated in "Nellie Dean" (4)
20, 9Ac and 1Dn. Fluctuating fortunes experienced by the lift operator! (3,3,5)

CODEWORD

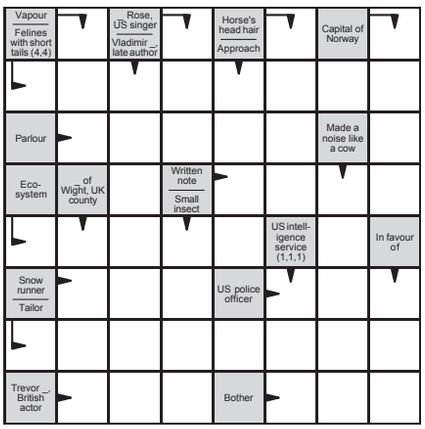
This puzzle has no clues. Instead, every number printed in the grid represents a letter, with the same number always representing the same letter.
For example, if 8 turns out to be a V, you can write in V wherever a square contains 8. Using your knowledge of words, complete the puzzle.



A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z



Arrowword

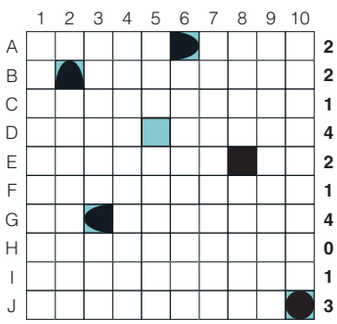


Enter your answers in the direction indicated by the arrows.

Battleships

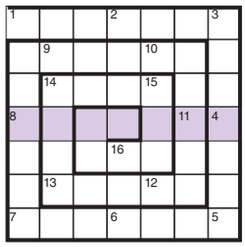
Find where ships shown below are hidden in the grid. The numbers to the right of and below the grid indicate how many of the squares in that row are filled in with ships or parts of ships. The ships do not touch each other, even diagonally. Some of the squares have been filled to start you off.

THE FLEET
1 x Battleship
2 x Cruiser
3 x Destroyer
4 x Submarine





Word Spiral



Starting from 1, fill in the grid clockwise with four-letter words. The last letter of each word becomes the first letter of the next to reveal the key word in the shaded boxes.

1. Body powder
2. Cot
3. Surety
4. Uneven walk
5. Poke
6. Moist
7. Fruit
8. Thaw
9. Skinny
10. Church part
11. Engrave
12. Suspend
13. Courage
14. Labour
15. Molten rock
16. Curved structure

Keyword clue: A boy's name

SUDOKU

Hard

			2	3	4		6	
					1	8		
	3		8					7
		8				1		5
		3		8		9		
9		5				2		
2							9	
		9	3					
	1		7	2	9			

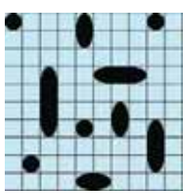
Easy

7				8		1		
	8	2	3	9			6	
	1		7				5	2
	5			7	9			4
6		9	2		8	3		
	4		1				7	
4	2				6		3	
	3	7		2	5			1
		6				5		8

Solutions

Arrowword
GAMMON
MAXIM
SCAT
SLOT
BIOME
SKI
COT
LOVER
EVE

Battleships



Double Crossword
Cryptic
Across: 6 Colours; 7 Signs; 9 And; 10 Across; 12 Long stretch; 15 Battery hens; 17 Palatable; 19 Tax; 21 Glean; 22 Keeping. Down: 1 Downs; 2 Box; 3 Amo; 4 Miscreant; 5 In touch; 8 Clutch; 11 Portrayal; 13 German; 14 Gains; 18 Led; 20 Ups.
Quick
Across: 6 Tumbler; 7 Smear; 9 Tax; 10 Primitive; 12 Discourtesy; 15 Proposition; 17 Refineer; 19 Mix; 21 Sloth; 22 Produce.
Down: 1 Rural; 2 Ebb; 3 Seer; 4 Imitation; 5 Harvest; 8 Amount; 11 Disparity; 13 Casket; 14 Orderly; 16 Pitch; 18 Earn; 20 Odd.
Codeword
1=C, 2=F, 3=A, 4=L, 5=V, 6=F, 7=O, 8=K, 9=Y, 10=X, 11=W, 12=H, 13=D, 14=I, 15=N, 16=Q, 17=J, 18=R, 19=G, 20=T, 21=M, 22=B, 23=E, 24=S, 25=Z, 26=U
Word Spiral
1 Talc; 2 Crib; 3 Bail; 4 Limp; 5 Prod; 6 Damp; 7 Plum; 8 Melt; 9 Thin; 10 Nave; 11 Etch; 12 Hang; 13 Grit; 14 Toil; 15 Lava; 16 Arch.
Keyword: Michael

Sudoku - Hard

8	9	7	2	3	4	5	6	1
4	5	2	6	7	1	8	3	9
6	3	1	8	9	5	4	2	7
7	2	8	9	6	3	1	4	5
1	4	3	5	8	2	9	7	6
9	6	5	4	1	7	2	8	3
2	7	6	1	5	8	3	9	4
5	8	9	3	4	6	7	1	2
3	1	4	7	2	9	6	5	8

Sudoku - Easy

7	6	4	5	8	2	1	9	3
5	8	2	3	9	1	4	6	7
9	1	3	7	6	4	8	5	2
3	5	1	6	7	9	2	8	4
6	7	9	2	4	8	3	1	5
2	4	8	1	5	3	9	7	6
4	2	5	8	1	6	7	3	9
8	3	7	9	2	5	6	4	1
1	9	6	4	3	7	5	2	8

5 of the world's best journeys by rail



Rail journeys are back in fashion, says Mike Pickup.

1 One of the most spectacular is the Pride of Africa (www.rovos.com). The 15 day journey starts in Cape Town, then onto the diamond town of Kimberley and the capital Pretoria. Two nights in the Madikwe Game Reserve, then on through Botswana into Zimbabwe, with overnight stay at the Victoria Falls Hotel before crossing the Zambezi. Then it's down into the Great Rift Valley before crossing the Selous Game Reserve, and on to Dar es Salaam in Tanzania.

2 For over 25 years the Rocky Mountaineer (www.rockymountaineer.com) has transported passengers through the Canadian Rockies between Vancouver and Banff, providing the best scenery Canada has to offer. The journey lasts two days with overnight stop in Kamloops.

3 Australia's The Ghan (www.greatsouthernrail.com.au) traverses this vast country between Darwin and Adelaide. Covering 1,850 miles, the three day journey includes off-train excursions at Katherine, Alice Springs, and largely underground opal mining town, Coober Pedy.

4 One of the shortest trips is the Flam Railway (www.visitflam.com/en). The tiny village of Flam in Norway has a population of just 400, yet its railway - the world's steepest using normal traction - attracts 400,000 visitors a year. A popular option is to take the train up, then cycle down the old service road; hardly any pedalling needed.

5 The world's highest train trip is the Qinghai-Tibet railway, (www.chinatibettrain.com), aka the Lhasa Express. The 21 hour trip links Xining in Qinghai, China to Lhasa in Tibet. It negotiates the Tang Gu La Pass at over 16,500ft so there is oxygen at every seat. A couple of days in Xining acclimatising, can help to combat altitude sickness.

Top tip: Book all trips well in advance - they are very popular.

Robert James



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Refugee crisis is simply too great

THE comments made by the editor concerning immigration [KoS, editorial, 12.02] are correct, in that we in Britain have always had a history of welcoming refugees from abroad, but they ignore the fact that the current situation is unprecedented.

All decent people, if confronted by a despairing human being on their doorstep needing help, would try to offer them whatever assistance they could.

However if, instead of one or two, they found a thousand, they would just not possess the resources to help.

This would not make them xenophobes, or racists, but would be due to the size of the problem.

There are hundreds of millions of people living in the third world who would wish to live in the west, where they would hope to enjoy a better standard of living, and who could blame them?

We can see from the numbers of young men leaving countries without conflicts that economic migration is a major driving force.

Nevertheless, were all who desired to come to be admitted, then the economies of the west would collapse, to no one's benefit.

We should concentrate on helping those in need in their own countries, so that they can develop their own economies, and we in Britain are at the forefront of doing exactly that.

It is unfair to criticise the British when we are giving more per capita than almost any other country in the world.

Colin Bullen,
Tonbridge

KoS dragging the country into ruin

IT is 'luvvies' like you [KoS, editorial, 12.02] who are dragging this country into ruin.

The NHS is an example of people who have lived and worked in this country all of their lives but cannot get treatment because the service is overrun by immigrants.

The benefits system is rapidly going the same way and our schools are holding back British children because immigrant children don't understand English.

Greenfield sites are being destroyed because developers claim, albeit falsely, that there is a housing shortage due to over immigration.

On top of this asylum seekers get free NHS care, benefits and free housing as soon as they climb from the back of their lorry.

P.J.E Pepper,
New Romney

LETTER OF THE WEEK



Dubs announcement is a national scandal

IT is shameful that Theresa May has decided to renege the government's promise to bring the most vulnerable refugee children to safety in the UK.

That the announcement was sneaked out by the Tories just before recess, is an absolute disgrace.

The UK has taken just 350 lone child refugees, which is nowhere near the 3000 originally proposed by Lord Dubs and is fewer than one per local authority in the UK.

Any claim by the prime minister to be a compassionate Conservative is utterly undermined by the dereliction of duty to some of the most vulnerable people in the world.

The government should have been doing far more to support local authorities in helping provide the support and safety child refugees need so desperately.

Only this week, a report by the counter-extremism organisation, Quilliam, revealed how thousands of vulnerable child refugees, abandoned by countries like the UK, are being left vulnerable to sexual and financial exploitation by human traffickers and radicalisation by groups like so-called Islamic State that are seeking to capitalise on Europe's wavering response to the refugee crisis.

This is a national scandal, which disgraces us all and the government should hang its head in shame.

Britain has a proud tradition of welcoming those most in need.

We stepped up to rescue 10,000 Jewish children from Nazi persecution.

One of those children was Lord Dubs, who arrived in the UK as a child refugee on the kindertransport.

Which is why I am calling for the prime minister to stand by the country's values, reverse her decision and keep Lord Dubs' scheme alive.

Keith Taylor
Green MEP for the south east

Silence over NHS is unacceptable

AS a concerned speech and language therapy student in training, I do not hold the usual concerns of a student preparing to leave education into the workforce, I hold concerns for my employer, the NHS.

I am angered over the silence, the NHS has been here just over a generation and now along with its creators, it is reaching its demise.

This year we've seen hospitals on their knees declaring they can no longer cope with a lack of resources.

How have the powers that be suggested we tackle this struggle? Further cuts to our profession.

I am a speech and language therapist practitioner, my role is to enable some of the most vulnerable in our society to communicate, feel valued and get their voices heard.

Yet, our own voices are being drowned out, with NHS staff morale at an all-time low, how can we support our patients if we in turn are not supported?

The current 'solutions' are only further crippling the NHS, rather than funding the system for all, we have begun turning patients to private companies to meet waiting time targets.

This is not a solution, this leads to underfunding as the money is sent out of the NHS to private companies rather than being pumped back into the system.

I urge people of Kent to get active, there is a £486 million funding gap in our area alone.

As Aneurin Bevan, the founder of the NHS states "The NHS will last as long as there are folk left with the faith to fight for it".

Natasha Simeone,
Chatham

Drivers fall foul of council fancies

READING all the usual rhetoric from Kent and Medway Speed camera industry [KoS, 12.02], it seems odd that they cannot give a figure for all the Speed Awareness Courses they and their partners sell.

Perhaps drivers should visit www.speed-awareness.org for more information.

I use a road in Faversham, that if caught, I would qualify for the newly announced 'serious offender' category.

This is not exactly true, as at present the road is 60mph, but local councillors, with support from Helen Whately MP, have voted to make it 20mph like all of Faversham's roads.

So it has nothing to do with safety, drivers are just falling foul of the whims and fancies of local councillors!

The usual statement that cameras are only erected at sites that have speed related crashes is repeated, but the camera is not placed where an accident has actually taken place, but could be several kilometres further away where no accidents took place, but in a more lucrative location.

Far better to have an early age starting road safety strategy and to teach all road users of their responsibilities to society, rather than this driver only focussed cash-grab.

The Highway Code says it "is essential reading for everyone" and pages for motorised transport do not start until page 83, but do pedestrians, mobility scooter riders, cyclists etc read those first 82 pages dedicated to them?

Terry Hudson,
Whitstable

The wait goes on

COMPLETELY agree with J Watson [KoS, letters, 12.02] that we shouldn't be waiting so long for a Lower Thames Crossing update. Congestion in Dartford is a daily nightmare.

K Jones,
Dartford

KOS 10 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

AS part of our commitment to providing the best service to you, we have produced our 10 guiding principles

Kent on Sunday will:

1) Be available in every postcode in Kent.
2) Be fair, accurate and balanced.
3) Be written in clear, concise English.
4) Not be overly sensational.
5) Have a sense of humour.
6) Have an easily understood division between news, comment and advertising.
7) Seek to celebrate as well as constructively criticise.
8) Highlight topical issues of concern to people living in the county.
9) Spotlight individual cases which raise broader concerns.
10) Champion causes that it feels are important to the well-being of the county and its people.

We hope you enjoy Kent on Sunday.

images of kent



Murmuration of starlings

by **John Kemp, Whitstable**

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Stoke Rochford Hall

Best of the 60s Party Breaks at Easter Fri, 14 Apr, 2017

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LOVE THE 60s IN LINCOLNSHIRE – £199pp
Stoke Rochford Hall, nr Grantham
14 April: 3 nights – Vicki Lambert as Dusty Springfield, Rob Wheeler as The Beatle PLUS Ian Larkin the Cheeky Chappy

60s SOUNDS IN THE WYE VALLEY – £199pp
Penyard House Hotel, nr Ross on Wye
14 April: 3 nights – Roy Carter ex-Drifters and Foundations, Vicki Lambert as Dusty Springfield PLUS Ian Larkin the Cheeky Chappy

SOUNDS OF THE 60s EASTER IN SURREY – £159pp
Thatcher's Hotel, nr Guildford
14 April: 2 nights – The Frankie Valli Story & 60s party duo Bus Stop



Sounds of the 60s Summer Seaside Party

3 nights half board PLUS £149pp

Pontins Pakefield, Suffolk Coast
Self-Drive • Friday, 7 July, 2017 - Quote: PA7-KOS

Join us at Pontins Pakefield, on the Suffolk coast, for our exclusive, private summer 60s Party Weekend - for over 40s only. We've lined up a brilliant entertainment showbill featuring The Ivy League, Hermans Hermits, Vanity Fare, Steve Ellis's Love Affair, plus The Beached Boys. With non-stop fun from Friday evening to late on Sunday and HALF PRICE DRINKS, this is one party weekend you're sure to love.

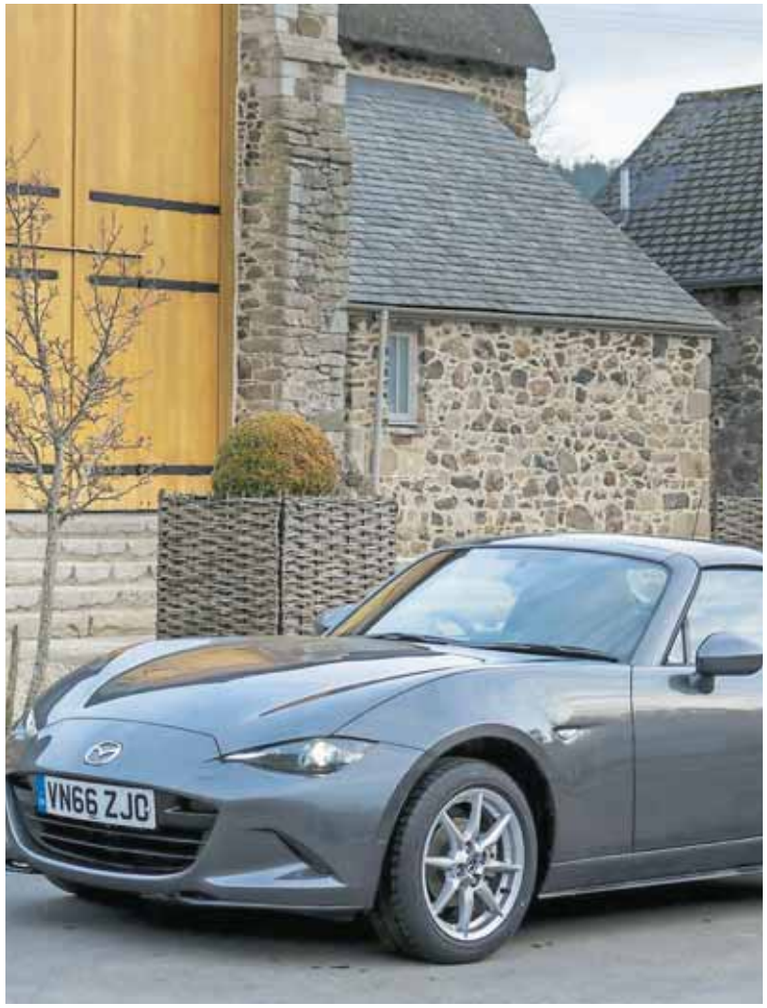
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By Steve Loader
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk





STYLISH: The newest member of Mazda's great sporting dynasty also stands alone in the market place – a classic in the making



Open top roadster fun in unrivalled fastback MX-5

RARELY can a car be called unique, but Mazda's new folding hardtop MX-5 RF (from £22,195) surely is.

It offers open top roadster fun, plus the security, added refinement and style of a coupe.

Even the flagship £28,995 2.0-litre 500-only 'Launch' special looks a steal, especially as Mazda happily points out that a 1990 entry level 1.6-litre MX-5 soft top cost £14,250 – a whopping £34k in today's money.

I can't think of a current rival at any price and, for visual impact, the RF (retractable fastback) compares well with past classics such as the E-Type fixed head, Datsun 240Z and even the virtually priceless Ferrari 250 GTO.

Not that it carries anything like their bulk; as ever, but more so with this latest generation MX-5 – packed with Mazda's energy and weight-saving Skyactiv technologies – the car is finely poised upon its front engine/rear drive layout.

However, the RF does carry an extra 45kg due to that roof and electric folding mechanism, an ingenious thing in action, though equivalent to adding a 13-year-old kid to the payload.

This was bound to have an effect, so while the 1.5-litre engine feels best in the super-light soft top MX-5, it seems slightly lacking in the RF, making the 2.0-litre the better bet in power and handling.



But is the RF worth the £2,000 premium over the soft top? Apart from the everyday flexibility and security of the folding roof it also retracts behind the seats in 13-seconds to keep boot space intact.

It looks stunning in roof up or down mode too, with the roof's side buttresses remaining in place to create a targa-top profile, while telling onlookers you bought the 'posh' MX-5 version.

But wind buffeting around those buttresses can be noisy at higher speeds – a fix may be needed, Mazda.

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KENT LIFE

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The official fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km) for the All-New Renault Mégane range are: urban 36.2 (7.8)–68.9 (4.1); extra-urban 57.7 (4.9)–80.7 (3.5); combined 47.1 (6)–76.4 (3.7). The official CO_2 emissions are 134–96g/km. Figures are obtained for comparative purposes in accordance with EU Legislation and may not reflect real-life driving results.

All-New Mégane Sport Tourer Dynamique Nav TCe 130 monthly payment based on £6,000 deposit, 24 monthly payments of £249, optional final payment of £7,674. Finance provided by Renault Finance, PO Box 149, Watford WD17 1FJ. Subject to status. Indemnities may be required. UK residents only (excluding the Channel Islands). Over 18s. Terms and conditions apply. Offer based on 6,000 miles per annum, excess mileage 8p per mile inc VAT. Finance available on selected new vehicles when ordered and registered by 31st March 2017. All-New Mégane Sport Tourer shown with optional metallic paint, available at £545.

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Slowly warming to Toyota's 4G Prius

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Toyota Prius 1.8 VVT-i Excel Auto

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Image:	★
Space:	★★★★
Value:	★★★★
Running costs:	★★★★★
How green?:	★★★★★
Best rival:	Lexus CT200h

YOU might think the hardest thing about producing a green car is creating an eco-friendly drivetrain, but it's making it look stylish.

I'm joking though, and there are exceptions to the rule, such as Tesla's electric cars – fine examples of what is achievable by a carmaker starting from scratch.

But Toyota's latest Prius (from £23,600) upholds my mischievous theory that styling is always side-lined in the quest for a planet-friendly motor.

The Japanese and world No1 carmaker also has previous: the first Prius appeared to have been in a front and rear end shunt, while its two hatchback successors looked as bland as the driving experience.

The fourth-generation car is more interesting though, and might have been inspired by the brutish Batmobile from the 1960s Batman TV series, only to be then damned by a relatively narrow width and small wheels from Noddy's car.

Despite garish styling inside, the five-door car does feel airy and roomy, with impressive boot (502 litres) and load space.







The world's best-selling hybrid and green icon also now feels quieter and far more refined; Toyota has added strength and rigidity, while cutting weight, boosting the effectiveness of the Prius' 71bhp electric motor.

A more efficient 97bhp 1.8 petrol engine then allows the combined powertrains to deliver 0-62mph in 10.4 seconds; not too bad and more than offset by an official combined 94.1mpg on versions fitted with the smaller 15-inch wheels – Noddy's spare set.

This Prius' ability to run in electric-only EV mode makes it particularly attractive to city drivers or those who do many short journeys; transition between EV and petrol power being quiet and seamless.

Toyota also seems to have conquered the previous anomaly, which saw the hybrid system caught out on motorway economy, because the petrol engine was doing all the work; this time I found fuel consumption more compatible with a similar size diesel hatchback.

Of course, dinosaurs like me will continually ask: "If this is the future of driving, please deliver the blow of oblivion now", but I did finally warm to the Prius despite the soul-less CVT (continually variable transmission) auto gearbox.

Rather like an addictive video game, you do start to adhere to a different style of driving, by trying to feather the right foot more and get the best numbers coming up on the dashboard economy scale – sad, though it is.



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LEGAL AND PUBLIC NOTICES

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSED DISPOSAL OF SURPLUS PLAYING FIELDS IN ACCORDANCE WITH S77 OF THE SCHOOL STANDARDS AND FRAMEWORK ACT 1998
LAND AT THE JOHN WALLIS ACADEMY, STANHOPE ROAD, ASHFORD, KENT

Kent County Council is proposing to dispose of this former school site and the capital receipt raised is to be invested in a new building for the John Wallis Academy.

The site to be sold comprises part of the John Wallis Academy currently in use as the Primary Phase of the Academy and comprises schools buildings and playing field.

The receipt from the sale of the playing field element will be prioritised towards the provision of the new sports facilities and supporting infrastructure then towards the cost of the new classrooms and associated expenditure.

In accordance with s77 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 Kent County Council is required to consult with local residents and the public with regard to the sale of the playing field land. The playing field element is as follows: Hard games Courts: approximately 840m2 Informal Play Areas: approximately 8079m2

Playing Pitches: approximately 25,400 m2.

The consultation lasts for six weeks from the date of this notice.

Any person or organisation wishing to make written representations on Kent County Council's proposal to sell this playing field land should send these to Kent County Council at enquiries@gen2.co.uk or by post to Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone, ME14 1XQ

Date: 15 February 2017

Bromley boarder battles for bronze

Ellie Soutter, 16, came third in snowboard cross for Team GB

Olympics

By Tom Pyman
tom.pyman@archant.co.uk



TRIUMPH: Bromley-born boarder Ellie Soutter

BROMLEY-BORN boarder Ellie Soutter claimed Team GB's first medal of the Erzurum 2017 European Youth Olympic Festival this week as the 16-year-old took snowboard cross bronze.

The teenager saw off the challenge of Russia's Zinaida Vasileva in the girls' final and secured third place behind Agathe Sillieres and Kim Martinez of France who took gold and silver respectively.

Soutter, who grew up in Surrey after moving from Bromley as a child, before moving to the Alps, had earlier narrowly edged out teammate Maisie Hill in the semi-final to clinch a spot to race for the medals before Hill went on to win the B final and finish fifth overall.

The medal comes midway through the festival, which features 17 Team GB athletes across five sporting disciplines, and Soutter admitted she was overcome with emotion as soon as she finished and was greeted by Hill.

"I don't think it's quite sunk in yet, I'm a little bit emotional," she said,

"I cried as I crossed the line - I was just so emotional as it hasn't been the best season for me and it's finally on the way up.

"I even asked my coach to put snow down my back when I was in the start gate. It helps wake me up so I don't feel all floppy like a jellyfish.

"It was so nice to have Maisie at the finish line - the support from the whole team has been amazing this week and it really helps motivate you. I just hope this isn't the last medal I win for Team GB - my goal is to compete at Beijing 2022."

Team GB's 17 athletes, all aged 15-17 years old, are competing across five of the nine disciplines at Erzurum 2017; alpine skiing, cross country skiing, figure skating, short track speed skating and snowboarding.

With many of the senior Team GB athletes working on the road to the PyeongChang 2018 Olympic Winter Games, European Youth Olympic Festivals play a crucial role in the development of young British athletes and provide a first multi-sport event experience that helps them along the route to achieving their own Olympic dreams.

Former Arsenal trainee keeper joins Ravens

Football

A FORMER Arsenal prospect has joined Bromley hours after the club announced the departure of goalkeeper Alan Julian.

Highly-rated shot-stopper Ross Flitney was a trainee with the Gunners before joining Championship outfit Fulham, and also enjoyed a long spell at Eastleigh, on loan from Gillingham.

Speaking to the club's website this week, Ravens manager Neil Smith said: "It's great to have Ross on board with all his experience.

"It was an easy decision to make with Ross having played at this level and above as well as having a great reputation and a hunger to stay and play at the highest level possible."



CHANGE: Bromley FC

Flitney added: "I'm pleased with the move, I have worked with Neil before and I know about the club's ambitions so I knew it was the right decision.

"Also for me to get back to playing at the highest level possible is exciting and I look forward to the challenge ahead."

The departing Julian said: "What a great time I've had at Bromley FC, I have some brilliant memories, winning the title and celebrating with my son on the pitch was a real special moment.

"A special thank you to the fans who have welcomed me from day one and have always been so supportive both home and away.

"A big thank you to the managers, coaches and physio department I've worked with.

"Also a special mention to 'Shims' my goalkeeping coach who has had a massive influence on me."

Sport Shorts

» Email **sports@kosmedia.co.uk** or call **Tom Pyman** on **01233653477**

Dame Kelly to compete in first Kent Cycle Ride



HERO: Dame Kelly Holmes

DAME Kelly Holmes has added her name to a star-studded list taking part in a charity bike ride this summer.

Kent's Athens hero will be taking part in the first ever Goatham's Great Kent Cycle Ride covering nearly 200 miles across the county in aid of Kent Sports Trust Foundation and Help for Heroes over the course of a three-day event in July.

"Having recently got into cycling myself, I have a new appreciation for Kent as it has some amazing routes and places to ride around," she said.

"I am especially looking forward to the first day when the riders will arrive in Hildenborough.

"The parish council have kindly allowed the event to be hosted on the recreation ground and my Cafe 1809 will be providing refreshments for everyone.

"I wish the organisers the best of luck with the planning and developments and look forward to getting back on my bike in July."

The event takes place from July 14-16.



CHAMPION: Ditton's Barry Hawkins

Hawkins beats Day to win World Grand Prix

DITTON'S Barry Hawkins survived a stirring fightback from Ryan Day to win snooker's World Grand Prix on Sunday night.

Hawkins, the world number 12, raced into a 9-3 lead at Preston's Guild Hall courtesy of five century breaks.

But Welshman Day forced his way back into the best-of-19 final by winning four successive frames.

A relieved Hawkins however, held his nerve in the 17th frame to pot the black and clinch the title 10-7 to claim the £100,000 top prize.

The Hawk has also impressed this week at the Welsh Open, recording comfortable victories over the likes of Fraser Patrick, Tian Pengfei, Thailand's Thepchaiya Un-Nooh and fellow Englishman Craig Steadman in Cardiff.

Testa departs as Fleet director

EBBSFLEET United have confirmed David Testa has left his position as a director on the club's board.

Mr Testa also announced his departure as CEO of the London Paramount project and other positions with the Kuwaiti European Holding Group last weekend.

Fleet director Stuart Butler-Gallie told the club's website this week: "[Vice-chairman] Peter Varney and I would like to take this opportunity to thank David for his valued contribution as a member of the board since the KEH Sports takeover in June 2013.

"We wish him well for the future and look forward to welcoming him back to Stonebridge Road as a fan, which we know he has become."

Fleet are currently flying high in the National League South.

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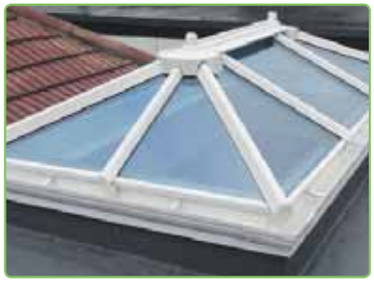
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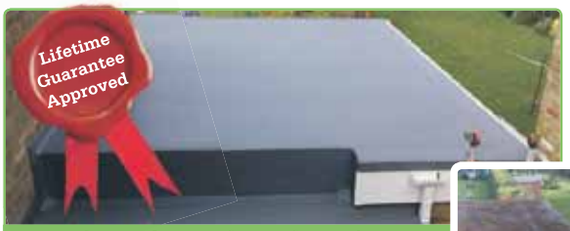
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images of kent



Murmuration of starlings

by **John Kemp, Whitstable**

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RDF Luxury Cars are a family business and have been in the hospitality industry for over 35 years in the Thanet area; we will take care of you from the start of your journey until the end, in comfort, style and luxury with little touches such as ribbons and drinks to make it all that much more special. If you would like to see the cars this can be arranged. All our drivers will ring ahead and be smartly dressed. Prices include ribbons, drinks & pick up from home to venue.



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*Conditions apply to low deposits - call for details


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Pontins Pakefield, Suffolk Coast
Self-Drive • Friday, 7 July, 2017 - Quote: PA7-KOS

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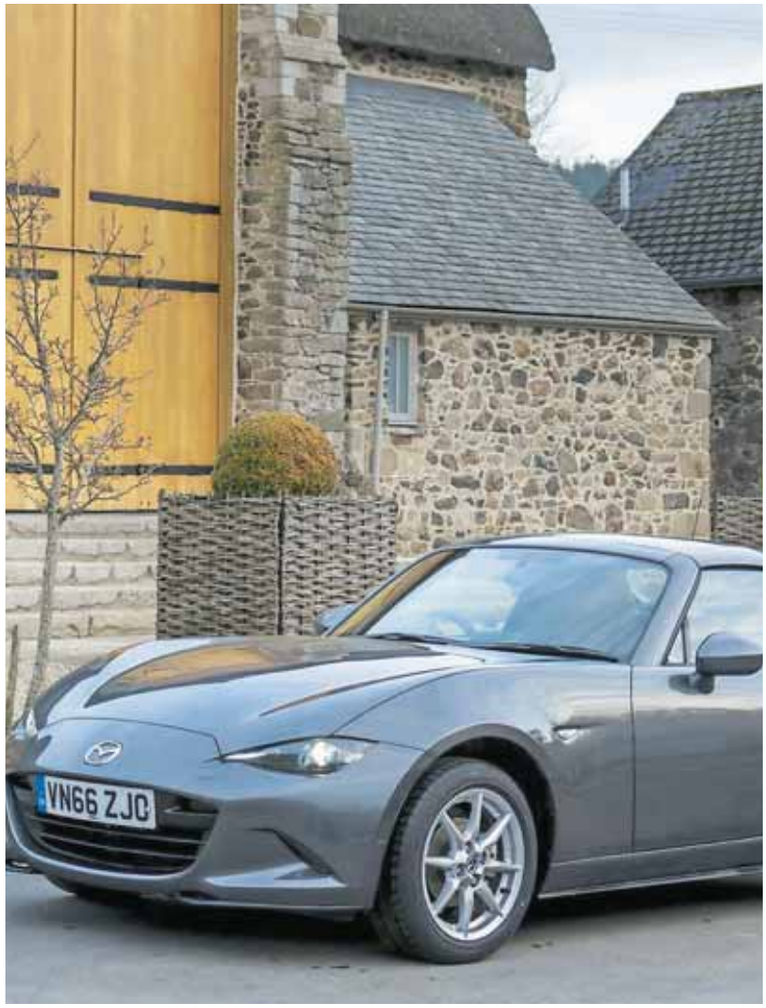
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driving

By Steve Loader
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk





STYLISH: The newest member of Mazda's great sporting dynasty also stands alone in the market place – a classic in the making



Open top roadster fun in unrivalled fastback MX-5

RARELY can a car be called unique, but Mazda's new folding hardtop MX-5 RF (from £22,195) surely is.

It offers open top roadster fun, plus the security, added refinement and style of a coupe.

Even the flagship £28,995 2.0-litre 500-only 'Launch' special looks a steal, especially as Mazda happily points out that a 1990 entry level 1.6-litre MX-5 soft top cost £14,250 – a whopping £34k in today's money.

I can't think of a current rival at any price and, for visual impact, the RF (retractable fastback) compares well with past classics such as the E-Type fixed head, Datsun 240Z and even the virtually priceless Ferrari 250 GTO.

Not that it carries anything like their bulk; as ever, but more so with this latest generation MX-5 – packed with Mazda's energy and weight-saving Skyactiv technologies – the car is finely poised upon its front engine/rear drive layout.

However, the RF does carry an extra 45kg due to that roof and electric folding mechanism, an ingenious thing in action, though equivalent to adding a 13-year-old kid to the payload.

This was bound to have an effect, so while the 1.5-litre engine feels best in the super-light soft top MX-5, it seems slightly lacking in the RF, making the 2.0-litre the better bet in power and handling.



But is the RF worth the £2,000 premium over the soft top? Apart from the everyday flexibility and security of the folding roof it also retracts behind the seats in 13-seconds to keep boot space intact.

It looks stunning in roof up or down mode too, with the roof's side buttresses remaining in place to create a targa-top profile, while telling onlookers you bought the 'posh' MX-5 version.

But wind buffeting around those buttresses can be noisy at higher speeds – a fix may be needed, Mazda.

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All-New Mégane Sport Tourer Dynamique Nav TCe 130 monthly payment based on £6,000 deposit, 24 monthly payments of £249, optional final payment of £7,674. Finance provided by Renault Finance, PO Box 149, Watford WD17 1FJ. Subject to status. Indemnities may be required. UK residents only (excluding the Channel Islands). Over 18s. Terms and conditions apply. Offer based on 6,000 miles per annum, excess mileage 8p per mile inc VAT. Finance available on selected new vehicles when ordered and registered by 31st March 2017. All-New Mégane Sport Tourer shown with optional metallic paint, available at £545.

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Best rival:	Lexus CT200h

YOU might think the hardest thing about producing a green car is creating an eco-friendly drivetrain, but it's making it look stylish.

I'm joking though, and there are exceptions to the rule, such as Tesla's electric cars – fine examples of what is achievable by a carmaker starting from scratch.

But Toyota's latest Prius (from £23,600) upholds my mischievous theory that styling is always side-lined in the quest for a planet-friendly motor.

The Japanese and world No1 carmaker also has previous: the first Prius appeared to have been in a front and rear end shunt, while its two hatchback successors looked as bland as the driving experience.

The fourth-generation car is more interesting though, and might have been inspired by the brutish Batmobile from the 1960s Batman TV series, only to be then damned by a relatively narrow width and small wheels from Noddy's car.

Despite garish styling inside, the five-door car does feel airy and roomy, with impressive boot (502 litres) and load space.







The world's best-selling hybrid and green icon also now feels quieter and far more refined; Toyota has added strength and rigidity, while cutting weight, boosting the effectiveness of the Prius' 71bhp electric motor.

A more efficient 97bhp 1.8 petrol engine then allows the combined powertrains to deliver 0-62mph in 10.4 seconds; not too bad and more than offset by an official combined 94.1mpg on versions fitted with the smaller 15-inch wheels – Noddy's spare set.

This Prius' ability to run in electric-only EV mode makes it particularly attractive to city drivers or those who do many short journeys; transition between EV and petrol power being quiet and seamless.

Toyota also seems to have conquered the previous anomaly, which saw the hybrid system caught out on motorway economy, because the petrol engine was doing all the work; this time I found fuel consumption more compatible with a similar size diesel hatchback.

Of course, dinosaurs like me will continually ask: "If this is the future of driving, please deliver the blow of oblivion now", but I did finally warm to the Prius despite the soul-less CVT (continually variable transmission) auto gearbox.

Rather like an addictive video game, you do start to adhere to a different style of driving, by trying to feather the right foot more and get the best numbers coming up on the dashboard economy scale – sad, though it is.



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Motability

Model shown: Ignis SZ5 ALLGRIP at £13,999 on the road (metallic paint available from £465). Ignis range official fuel consumption figures in mpg (L/100km): Urban from 51.3 (5.5) to 57.6 (4.9), Extra Urban from 64.2 (4.4) to 70.6 (4.0), Combined from 60.1 (4.7) to 65.7 (4.3). Official CO2 emissions from 106g/km to 97g/km.

The above fuel consumption figures are based on an EU test for comparative purposes only and may not reflect driving results. *Free insurance offer: Excludes Ignis SZ3. UK residents aged 21-79 only. Order by 28 February 2017, register by 31 March 2017. Subject to availability. Offer only available when vehicle purchased through Personal Contract Purchase (PCP) by Suzuki Finance, available from participating Dealers, subject to status. Terms, exclusions & eligibility criteria apply, see suzuki.co.uk/cars/ignisfreeinsurance. 5.9% APR representative on Suzuki Personal Contract Purchase. Maximum 49 month term. Terms and Conditions apply. The offer above is available from participating Authorised Suzuki Dealers only. The offer cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer unless otherwise stated. Finance is provided by Suzuki Financial Services Ltd (excludes Channel Islands and Isle of Man). Suzuki Financial Services Ltd reserves the right to withdraw or amend this offer without notice or prior warning. Suzuki Financial Services Ltd, part of Lloyds Banking Group, St William House, Tresillian Terrace, Cardiff, CF10 5BH. Suzuki Insurance is provided by Original Insurance Services, registered in England and Wales No. 05686831 at Batchworth House, Church Street, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire, WD3 1JE and is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. It is underwritten by Allianz Insurance plc, registered in England No. 84638 at 57 Ladymead, Guildford, Surrey, GU1 1DB. Allianz Insurance plc is authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority (Financial Services Register No. 121849). Offer correct at time of going to print.

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LEGAL AND PUBLIC NOTICES

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSED DISPOSAL OF SURPLUS PLAYING FIELDS IN ACCORDANCE WITH S77 OF THE SCHOOL STANDARDS AND FRAMEWORK ACT 1998
LAND AT THE JOHN WALLIS ACADEMY, STANHOPE ROAD, ASHFORD, KENT

Kent County Council is proposing to dispose of this former school site and the capital receipt raised is to be invested in a new building for the John Wallis Academy.

The site to be sold comprises part of the John Wallis Academy currently in use as the Primary Phase of the Academy and comprises schools buildings and playing field.

The receipt from the sale of the playing field element will be prioritised towards the provision of the new sports facilities and supporting infrastructure then towards the cost of the new classrooms and associated expenditure.

In accordance with s77 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 Kent County Council is required to consult with local residents and the public with regard to the sale of the playing field land. The playing field element is as follows: Hard games Courts: approximately 840m2 Informal Play Areas: approximately 8079m2

Playing Pitches: approximately 25,400 m2.

The consultation lasts for six weeks from the date of this notice.

Any person or organisation wishing to make written representations on Kent County

Council's proposal to sell this playing field land should send these to Kent County Council at enquiries@gen2.co.uk or by post to Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone, ME14 1XQ

Date: 15 February 2017

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Bromley boarder battles for bronze

Ellie Soutter, 16, came third in snowboard cross for Team GB

Olympics

By Tom Pyman
tom.pyman@archant.co.uk



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"I cried as I crossed the line - I was just so emotional as it hasn't been the best season for me and it's finally on the way up.

"I even asked my coach to put snow down my back when I was in the start gate. It helps wake me up so I don't feel all floppy like a jellyfish.

"It was so nice to have Maisie at the finish line - the support from the whole team has been amazing this week and it really helps motivate you. I just hope this isn't the last medal I win for Team GB - my goal is to compete at Beijing 2022."

Team GB's 17 athletes, all aged 15-17 years old, are competing across five of the nine disciplines at Erzurum 2017; alpine skiing, cross country skiing, figure skating, short track speed skating and snowboarding.

With many of the senior Team GB athletes working on the road to the PyeongChang 2018 Olympic Winter Games, European Youth Olympic Festivals play a crucial role in the development of young British athletes and provide a first multi-sport event experience that helps them along the route to achieving their own Olympic dreams.

Former Arsenal trainee keeper joins Ravens

Football

A FORMER Arsenal prospect has joined Bromley hours after the club announced the departure of goalkeeper Alan Julian.

Highly-rated shot-stopper Ross Flitney was a trainee with the Gunners before joining Championship outfit Fulham, and also enjoyed a long spell at Eastleigh, on loan from Gillingham.

Speaking to the club's website this week, Ravens manager Neil Smith said: "It's great to have Ross on board with all his experience.

"It was an easy decision to make with Ross having played at this level and above as well as having a great reputation and a hunger to stay and play at the highest level possible."



CHANGE: Bromley FC

Flitney added: "I'm pleased with the move, I have worked with Neil before and I know about the club's ambitions so I knew it was the right decision.

"Also for me to get back to playing at the highest level possible is exciting and I look forward to the challenge ahead."

The departing Julian said: "What a great time I've had at Bromley FC, I have some brilliant memories, winning the title and celebrating with my son on the pitch was a real special moment.

"A special thank you to the fans who have welcomed me from day one and have always been so supportive both home and away.

"A big thank you to the managers, coaches and physio department I've worked with.

"Also a special mention to 'Shims' my goalkeeping coach who has had a massive influence on me."

Sport Shorts

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Dame Kelly to compete in first Kent Cycle Ride



HERO: Dame Kelly Holmes

DAME Kelly Holmes has added her name to a star-studded list taking part in a charity bike ride this summer.

Kent's Athens hero will be taking part in the first ever Goatham's Great Kent Cycle Ride covering nearly 200 miles across the county in aid of Kent Sports Trust Foundation and Help for Heroes over the course of a three-day event in July.

"Having recently got into cycling myself, I have a new appreciation for Kent as it has some amazing routes and places to ride around," she said.

"I am especially looking forward to the first day when the riders will arrive in Hildenborough.

"The parish council have kindly allowed the event to be hosted on the recreation ground and my Cafe 1809 will be providing refreshments for everyone.

"I wish the organisers the best of luck with the planning and developments and look forward to getting back on my bike in July."

The event takes place from July 14-16.



CHAMPION: Ditton's Barry Hawkins

Hawkins beats Day to win World Grand Prix

DITTON'S Barry Hawkins survived a stirring fightback from Ryan Day to win snooker's World Grand Prix on Sunday night.

Hawkins, the world number 12, raced into a 9-3 lead at Preston's Guild Hall courtesy of five century breaks.

But Welshman Day forced his way back into the best-of-19 final by winning four successive frames.

A relieved Hawkins however, held his nerve in the 17th frame to pot the black and clinch the title 10-7 to claim the £100,000 top prize.

The Hawk has also impressed this week at the Welsh Open, recording comfortable victories over the likes of Fraser Patrick, Tian Pengfei, Thailand's Thepchaiya Un-Nooh and fellow Englishman Craig Steadman in Cardiff.

Testa departs as Fleet director

EBBSFLEET United have confirmed David Testa has left his position as a director on the club's board.

Mr Testa also announced his departure as CEO of the London Paramount project and other positions with the Kuwaiti European Holding Group last weekend.

Fleet director Stuart Butler-Gallie told the club's website this week: "[Vice-chairman] Peter Varney and I would like to take this opportunity to thank David for his valued contribution as a member of the board since the KEH Sports takeover in June 2013.

"We wish him well for the future and look forward to welcoming him back to Stonebridge Road as a fan, which we know he has become."

Fleet are currently flying high in the National League South.

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